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ABSTRACT

This draft report on the development and testing of a child care Provider Services Network (PSN) model in Santa Clara County, California, includes a handbook (Manual to Optimize a PSN) designed to provide the State Department of Education and regional or local child care coordinating agencies with information needed to develop PSN optimization projects in other counties. (Santa Clara County had 25,000 children in licensed child care and 5,000 in unlicensed, with 2,000 licensed family day care homes and over 350 child care centers.) Project description, findings and recommendations accompanying the manual cover PSN goals and functions and emphasize State Department of Education encouragement of local responsiblity for directing change efforts. The first section of the manual describes: the Santa Clara PSN; the existing interrelationships among child care providers and the individuals and organizations providing them with resources; four component roles in the PSN model (providers, resource agents, facilitators and network managers); and strategies for optimizing a PSN involving use of organizational assistance, demonstration and pilot programs, training and technical assistance, research and policy analysis, and public education. The manual's second section deals with the necessity for a change agent, and the third section discusses the optimization process. (BF)

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URSA

DRAFT FINAL REPORT

OF THE

PROVIDER SERVICES NETWORK PROJECT

MARCH 15, 1977

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I. INTRODUCTION

This draft report presents a draft of the final and tested model of a "Provider Services Network" (PSN) developed by Urban and Rural Systems Associates (URSA) under contract to the Child Care Pilot Study of the Santa Clara County Office of Education. This draft has been developed six months into the contract, with three months still to come. The remaining three months will involve further PSN implementation and evaluation tasks and therefore may indicate changes in the model as it is presented here. In addition, this draft is being submitted for review to the contracting officer, staff of the Child Care Pilot Study, significant members of the Santa Clara PSN and other specialists in the field of child care services. The final report, to be submitted on June 30, 1977 will incorporate the suggestions and criticisms offered by these reviewers. This report consists of five sections: The Introduction; The Findings, which is in two sections, The PSN Model and Optimizing a PSN; and the Conclusions and Recommendations; and a Manual to Optimize a PSN in any county.

BACKGROUND

The delivery of child care services in California has traditionally been characterized by a lack of coordination, a lack of comprehensive service delivery, and gaps in ethnic, regional and socio-economic groups served. In 1973, in response to this problem the California Legislature mandated the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop and test a coordinated child care delivery system in a representative county in order to develop model programs and procedures for improving the delivery of child care services throughout the state. Santa Clara County was selected as the site for implementation of the Child Care Pilot Study, developed in response to the Legislature's mandate.

As part of that study, the Santa Clara County Office of Education contracted with URSA to develop and test a Model Provider Services Network capable of enhancing the quality of the child care services delivered to families and children "by improving the skills, resources, and effectiveness of the care-

givers" or child care Providers. That is, the contract with URSA called for the development of a system for assuring the availability of and coordinating the delivery of those resources that child care Providers need to be effective in delivering their services to families and their children.

In line with the Legislature's intent, it was also a clear objective of the contract to utilize the experience and the learnings gained through designing, implementing and testing the PSN in Santa Clara to develop a structural and procedural model that can be used to guide other communities interested in replicating Pilot Study's programmatic outcomes.

APPROACH

The original Request for Proposal conceived of the project as the development of a PSN model and its implementation in Santa Clara County. Its basic assumption was that no such network presently exists and needed to be developed. URSA's experience, on the other hand, indicated that in all places where child care is being provided,

- Providers of child care utilize resources in order to better deliver their child care services to their clients;
- Providers seek out not only agencies, organizations and individuals from which they can obtain the resources which they need, but also seek out and utilize individuals and organizations which are able to assist them in locating resources they need;
- agencies, organizations and individuals exist which see, as at least one of their tasks, either assisting Providers in locating resources or providing resources for Providers;
- the inter-relations of the various entities in the child care community constitute some form of network--i.e., a form of regularized inter-relationship over time - even though it may not be recognized as such by the individuals involved.

The approach, then, which URSA took to the development and testing of a Model PSN was based on the asumption that a PSN of some kind already existed in Santa Clara County--or in any county where child care services are being provided. Given this assumption, URSA's approach was designed to analyze that system <u>in vitro</u>

and to develop ways of modifying that system in order both to build upon and optimize the operations of the Santa Clara network, and to draw out generalizations about process, relationships, and the distribution of roles and responsibilities in an optimal network that can be applied in other counties. Thus the emphasis shifted from developing and implementing, to describing and optimizing.

URSA's experience further indicated that while the provision of resources and the utilization of resources is taking place, it is happening in a manner which is wasteful due to

- inappropriate planning in the distribution of resources;
- duplicated efforts in the provision of resources;
- limited provision of resources through the application of eligibility criteria;
- use of inadequate assessment tools to determine need for resources and efficacy of resources provided.

These experiences indicated to URSA that its underlying concern in developing the model should be twofold:

- that the model reflect as accurately as possible the reality of the interrelationships in the county;
- that there be developed a method of determining a) how well the network in the county was functioning, and b) areas in which that network could be strengthened.

In URSA's experience, institutions and individuals naturally resist change, unless they have a means of participating in the decisions which structure and focus the change. Part of the responsibility of URSA in this effort was to attempt to implement strategies to improve the Santa Clara County PSN. Hence, the over-riding purpose behind the establishment of a community-based group of key actors in the child care delivery system was to enlist the participation and assistance of the members of that group in an advisory capacity. The purpose of this group was to provide URSA with a means for reality-testing the model as it was developed and for testing out strategies for increasing the functioning of the network in Santa Clara County. As the project has evolved, this County Review Group took

an increasingly major role in the planning of implementation strategies, decisions regarding the best use of URSA resources, and in determining priorities for the Santa Clara PSN.

In addition to utilizing the County Review Group for these purposes, a draft of the conceptualization of the PSN was sent to a number of individuals who are engaged elsewhere in similar activities in the child care field. The comments and criticisms from those individuals also supplied a significant reality check on the development of the model.

As the process of the development of the model continued, significant shifts in emphasis and definition were made in order to meet the primary criterion of describing the inter-relationships which in fact exist not only in Santa Clara County, but in other localities as well.

The model, a presentation of which appears below in Sections II and III, was tested in Santa Clara County through the implementation of strategies in that county.

A further assumption on the part of URSA is that what is presented here is not a "fixed" PSN model, but rather the beginning of a process which will, through our findings and recommendations, assist those on both state and county level who are concerned with the provision of quality child care services.

Finally, it must be noted that the development of a PSN model has involved conceptualizing in an area that is new. Because we are "groundbreaking," a significant part of our effort has been devoted to developing and refining meaningful definitions and in communicating the conceptual changes to members of the Santa Clara PSN and to our contracting officer for further refinements. Thus, definitions used in the initial URSA proposal, and in reports to date, may not be the same as they are used in this draft of the final model.

THE FINDINGS: II. PRESENTATION OF THE PSN MODEL

III. OPTIMIZING A PSN

II. PRESENTATION OF THE PSN MODEL

A. INTRODUCTION

Family day care homes and child care centers provide childcare services directly to families in a community, but they do not stand alone. They receive support from agencies and individuals who control and distribute resources (Resource Agents), and they receive assistance from people (Facilitators) who have information and social connections required to link child care Providers with the resources they need. Child care Providers, Resource Agents, and Facilitators constitute a Provider Service Network (PSN).

The efficiency and effectiveness with which a network operates as a comprehensiv service delivery system depends in large part on the skill with which activities are planned and coordinated on a community-wide basis. These tasks, among others, are performed by people who act as Network Managers.

Although we could think of Providers, Resource Agents, Facilitators, and Network Managers as specific individuals or groups who have specific jobs in a PSN, it is much more useful to think of them as different roles that most members of a PSN play at different times. For example, people who operate child care centers function as Providers most of the time, but at other times they serve as Resource Agents for directors of new centers who need assistance in getting their centers into operation, as Facilitators who relay information about Resource Agents to other Providers (and vice versa), and as Network Managers who participate in county-wide child care planning and coordinating activities.

This chapter focuses not on individuals or organizations, but on four roles in a PSN:

- Provider
- Resource Agent
- Facilitator
- Network Manager

It discusses their functions and the ways in which they relate to each other, illustrates each topic with examples from Santa Clara County, and concludes with a general description of a PSN as a whole. It deals with relations among Providers,

Resource Agents, Facilitators and Network Managers. Although they are important, relations between child care Providers and the families they serve are beyond the scope of this presentation.

B. PROVIDERS, RESOURCE AGENTS, FACILITATORS

Providers are individuals or groups of individuals who care for children (age 0-18) other than, but possibly in addition to, their own children for less than 24 hours a day. There are two basic types of child care Providers; family day care homes (FDCH), and child care centers.

A family day care home is a private home which is used as the facility for the care of children, and in which at least one of the owners (or renters) of the home is the responsible caregiver. The number of children cared for is usually less than 12. Licensure is usually required, but not in all states, for example Arizona. By most informed estimates, FDCH's provide the bulk of available child care. Public funds are sometimes used to subsidize children in FDCH's.

A child care center is a type of child care in which a facility other than a private home is used for the care of children. The number of children cared for is usually in excess of 12. Licensure or accreditation is required in all states to insure the quality of the facility and care. Child care centers can be divided into several categories, including the following:

- Public child care centers
- Private non-profit child care centers
- Private for-profit child care centers
- Cooperative centers, or centers operated by associations.

The typology presented here is based on administration and organization features, not on program content. So Head Start Programs, for example, conducted in public child care centers, and centers that specialize in caring for mentally retarded children may be funded and administered either publicly or privately. The distinctions between the various types of child care providers are important since many Providers' needs are related to this typology.

Providers, in order to best do their work, have needs for information, materials, technical assistance, training, financial resources, and advocacy. Thus, in terms of the PSN, the role of the Provider is to utilize the appropriate resources in the provision of child care. To this end, the Provider must:

- assess its needs
- identify Resource Agents that can meet the needs, or appropriate Facilitators
- communicate those needs to the Resource Agent
- obtain and utilize its resources
- assess and communicate the appropriateness of the resources that it receives and uses

When this process breaks down, Providers lack the resources they need, use inappropriate resources, compete wastefully for resources that are well known, and eventually cease to function as effective members of a county-wide child care delivery system. We shall return to the central problem of matching needs with resources after we introduce the other components of a PSN.

Resource Agents are agencies, organizations, individuals or groups of individuals who deliver--or are capable of delivering--resources to child care Providers or groups of child care Providers. Resource Agents, therefore, can include federal and state agencies, local public and private agencies, educational institutions, advocacy groups, private sector organizations, voluntary organizations, consultants, other child care providers, and parents to increase the ability of Providers to operate better child care programs. There are six basic kinds of resources that Resource Agents can distribute. They are:

- financial resources in the form of fees, grants, loans or donations
- information and research data
- human resources in the form of volunteer or paid staff, consultants, professional experts or para-professionals
- program of administrative materials that are donated or shared
- advocacy in the form of organizational assistance, legislative lobbying, media representation, etc.
- moral support in the form of contact with other providers

Some Resource Agents are child care specific; that is, they provide resources only to child care Providers (4C for example); while other Resource Agents (such as public health nurses) provide support to non-child care organizations as well.

In addition, some Resource Agents are "single purpose" agencies that provide only one type of resource or service, such as information or training; while others provide a wider range of support services and resources. Other Resource Agents provide resources only within delineated service areas, while others provide resources without regard to geography, but limit services to specific target populations or to providers serving such populations.

In the context of a PSN the major roles of a Resource Agent are to allocate and distribute the resources that it controls. In order to do these jobs effectively, a Resource Agent must do the following:

- assess its own resources
- identify eligible population to receive resources
- assess the needs of child care Providers who are eligible to receive its resources
- allocate its resources to Providers
- determine and employ appropriate means to deliver its resources to selected Providers
- assess the appropriateness of the resources which are used by Providers

This process complements the activities of child care Providers when they function as users of resources within a PSN.

Facilitators are agencies, organizations, individuals or groups of individuals who function to facilitate contact between Resource Agents and Providers in need of particular resources. Facilitators must have a knowledge of both needs and resources, and an ability to help Providers and Resource Agents to communicate with each other.

Some Facilitators are "generalists" who deal with most or all aspects of child care throughout a geographic area, (e.g. in a particular city), while other Facilitators focus on linkages involving particular types of needs or resources, such as health resources or resources related to facility planning or rehabilitation.

Facilitators may be formally assigned to the facilitation role by their agencies or organizations, or an entire agency or organization might formally assume a coordinative or facilitative role in a PSN. However, Facilitators often "emerge" and function in the facilitation role informally and in addition to their other functions or duties.

Since a major role of a Facilitator is to serve as a link between Providers and Resource Agents, a Facilitator must do the following:

- identify Resource Agents of potential use to Providers;
- assess and interpret Resource Agents' eligibility criteria;
- assess the needs of Providers;
- assist Providers to contact and communicate effectively with appropriate Resource Agents;
- assess appropriateness of Resource Agents' methods of resource delivery.

This process is intermediate between, and overlaps with, the ones previously described for Providers and Resource Agents.

C. MANAGEMENT OF A PSN

On the one hand, Providers, Resource Agents, and Facilitators are <u>people and organizations</u> which together comprise a PSN. On the other hand, delivering services, allocating and distributing resources, and establishing effective communications are <u>activities</u> which occur among individuals and organizations, and it is these <u>activities</u> which integrate the individuals and organizations into a PSN. From the latter point of view, it is the activities rather than the components that allow us to refer to a group as a "network" rather than as a "collection" or an "assortment."

In order to be maintained as a network, several functions must be accomplished that link together the various elements of a child care delivery system. In addition to communication among individuals in a PSN, overall coordination, evaluation, maintenance, management, advocacy and assistance are necessary for the functioning of each element involved in child care delivery. These network management functions include:

- identifying and involving new Providers, Resource Agents and Facilitators in the PSN
- developing and/or improving communication among Providers, among Resource Agents, Among Facilitators, and among those performing Network Management Roles.
- collating, coordinating and analyzing assessment activities
- evaluating the efficacy of Provider, Resource Agent, Facilitator and Network Management function-modes
- assisting PSN entities in improving Provider, Resource Agent, Facilitator and Network Management function-modes; and
- engaging in advocacy on behalf of PSN entities

Some organizations, agencies or individuals may perceive of their roles in the PSN as Network Managers. For example, in Santa Clara County the 4Cs perceives its role as a central coordinating agency in the county. Thus it consciously involves itself in communication, coordination and planning activities involving child care Providers, Facilitators and Resource Agents.

In addition, a range of individuals and agencies may engage in one or several Network Managemnet activities and thus perform Network Management functions without being aware of it. For example, the Family Day Care Home Association in Santa Clara County is actively involved in recruiting new members into its organization. They may or may not perceive that they are also involving new members in a PSN, but by virtue of bringing a family day care home Provider into an organization of Providers that serves as a Provider advocate and representative in the overall child care delivery system, they are also involving that Provider in the PSN.

III. OPTIMIZING A PROVIDER SERVICES NETWORK

INTRODUCTION

The model of a PSN that has been postulated so far describes what a PSN is, what its goals are, how it functions. It does not, however, provide criteria for determining how well it functions or whether it functions optimally. The purpose of this section is to present a working definition of "optimal PSN" and strategies for optimizing any PSN.

Definition--"Optimal PSN"

As URSA is using the term, an "optimal PSN" is one in which all functions of the PSN are performed such that there are no gaps and unnecessary duplications in that performance.

In this definition, a "gap" is a situation in which a function is not being performed in regard to an entity or group of entities within the PSN. For example, no entity in the Santa Clara County PSN performs the Network Manager function of evaluating the efficacy of the Network Manager function-modes; in other words, no one is, at this time, evaluating the way in which the Network Managers perform their functions in the county.

An "unnecessary duplication" is a situation in which a duplication of functions causes a conflict or waste of resources. For example, in the Santa Clara County PSN, the Family Day Care Association, in the role of Network Manager, seeks to identify and involve new Providers in the PSN throughout the entire county. Likewise, Palo Alto Community Child Care, functioning in a similar role, seeks to do the same thing within the city of Palo Alto, i.e., in a small part of the county. This is an unnecessary duplication insofar as it causes conflict between the two groups, and through that conflict, requires an expenditure of resources for maintaining the conflict.

"Optimal PSN" does not refer to the level of performance of any of those functions, or the efficacy with which the functions are performed. Responsibility for determining efficacy, level of performance, and ways to improve performance lies within the ken of those entities of the PSN which perform Network Manager roles.

BARRIERS TO OPTIMAL FUNCTIONING

A barrier is anything which acts to constrain, impede or limit (a) the identification and communication of Providers' needs; (b) the ability of Facilitators to link Providers with appropriate Resource Agents; (c) the ability of Resource Agents to provide and deliver appropriate resources; and (d) the ability of Network Managers to manage and coordinate PSN functions.

Thus, a barrier to optimal functioning is anything which acts to constrain, impede or limit the performance of a PSN function.

As mentioned earlier, PSN's are often subject to the influence of various exogenous forces that they cannot control. The operation of such forces frequently creates barriers to effectiveness. For example, budget cutbacks can decrease the financial resources available to Providers or limit proposed expansions in the delivery system, or narrow interpretations of eligibility requirements can limit the availability of resources to some Providers in need.

However, many--and probably most--barriers to optimal PSN functioning are endogenous and subject to intervention at the local level. Typical barriers of this type include:

- failure of Providers, Facilitators, or Resource Agents to recognize that problems or needs exist;
- inability of Providers to express or communicate needs;
- the use of inappropriate assessment modes;
- unwillingness of Providers to request assistance from or communicate needs to certain Resource Agents (for example, to those who may also have some regulatory responsibility);
- communication of needs in an appropriate manner or format;

- lack of information about what resources are available and how to apply for them;
- inability of providers to make efficient use of resources that are delivered to them;
- lack of communication between providers;
- undue competition between Providers for resources;
- inability of Resource Agents to identify and assess needs of Providers;
- inability of Resource Agents to communicate with Providers about resource availability;
- policies or practices that reduce Providers' access to resources (e.g., geographic eligibility criteria);
- utilization of inappropriate resource delivery modalities;
- failure of Facilitators to recognize Providers' needs;
- failure of Facilitators to know what resources are available and who has them to deliver;
- use of inappropriate lines of communication and/or inappropriate facilitation modalities by Facilitators;
- lack of information about Facilitators on the part of Providers or Resource Agents;
- lack of communication among Resource Agents.

Another way to state barriers is in reference to specific PSN functions. For example, one of the Network Management roles in Santa Clara County is "Identifying and seeking to involve new Resource Agents in the PSN." Presently, this is done on an ad hoc and crisis basis by a variety of PSN entities. There are several barriers which limit the performance of this function:

- no agency or individual has accepted or been given the responsibility for activities relevant to this function;
- in many cases, agency charters and funding sources focus on providing resources directly to individual clients, but experience difficulties in changing their focus to provide their resources to and through child care Providers. For example, the County Health Department has public health nurses on its staff to work with individual clients, but has had difficulty working with 4C to provide their staff people to child care centers;

- to date, little work has been done to clarify the needs of Providers qua Providers. This has made it difficult for agencies and individuals to seek out Resource Agents who might offer resources to meet those needs.

STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMIZING A PSN

There are five overall strategies that can be used either singly or in combination to increase the extent to which a PSN operates in an optimal manner. All require the assignment of specific responsibility for implementation, the allocation of sufficient resources and authority, and the development of realistic time frames if there is to be any real improvement in a PSN's functional competence. The five strategies are:

1) Organizational assistance (or community organization). This strategy involves organizing new agencies or groups or strengthening existing agencies or organizations. In the case of a PSN, this strategy might be employed to develop any or all of the following: an entity responsible for network management; an organization representing the interests of providers; a coordinating group of Resource Agents; or a child care advocacy group.

2) Demonstration and pilot programs. This strategy involves designing and implementing model programs, or program elements, of limited scope or size in order to provide in vitro demonstrations of programmatic feasibility or the feasibility of various processes and methods. Using this strategy effectively requires developing a careful plan for disseminating findings and implementing proven elements of the program, process, or method throughout the system.

   In the case of a PSN, this strategy might be used to develop and demonstrate exemplary assessment modes, resource delivery or facilitation modes, or mechanisms for coordinating network efforts.

3) Training and technical assistance. This strategy involves providing training or technical assistance to selected members of various network components in order to modify attitudes, or increase specific skills or competencies. The term "training" is used to refer to a formal process of structured

experiences that usually involves a group of trainees with similar needs. Technical assistance, on the other hand, refers to a less formal process for developing skills or capabilities of an individual or group. Technical assistance may be delivered to a group with common needs but it is often individualized and consists of demonstrations, examples, or advice and consultation related to the specific, and usually immediately pertinent, needs of those receiving it.

In the case of a PSN, training and technical assistance might be used as methods for disseminating findings of demonstrations or pilot programs; for limited skill-building purposes such as instructions on how to complete a particular application or reporting form required by a Resource Agent or a regulatory or licensing agency; or for broad skill areas such as raising funds, using needs assessment techniques, developing appropriate resource delivery modalities, or administering child care programs.

4) Research and policy analysis. This strategy involves conducting research aimed at defining both the explicit and implicit policies of an agency, organization, or group, and then describing and assessing the effects of such policies on other elements in the PSN. This strategy is often linked to other strategies. For example, research and policy analysis might lead to the development of a program which demonstrates different approaches to policy implementation, or to training or technical assistance aimed at modifying policies.

In the case of a PSN, this strategy might be employed to analyze the effect of particular Resource Agents' policies on Providers.

5) Public education. This strategy involves disseminating information (particularly "processed" information as opposed to raw data) to the various "publics" that comprise, affect, or are affected by the PSN and/or child care delivery system.

In the case of a PSN, public education might be used to develop broad support among the community for funding, among legislators for new regulations, among Resource Agents for a new system of priorities, or among Providers for introduction of new program content.

The particular strategies or sequences of strategies that are appropriate in any situation will depend on the type of barrier that the PSN is seeking to eliminate, the particular "target group," the PSN's priorities, the extent to which resistance is likely to be encountered, the PSN's past experience with the various strategies, and the availability of resources capable of effectively implementing the various strategies. Clearly, the tactics used to implement each strategy will also vary with the context in which implementation will occur.

There are many ways to use strategies to optimize specific PSN functions. Furthermore, any single strategy may be used to optimize more than one function, and several strategies may be combined to optimize a single function. The primary purpose of the following list of strategy possibilities is to give examples of how strategies might be used, rather than to indicate how they should be used in individual cases. Italicized statements are functions, roman statements are possible strategies, and parenthesized expressions refer to the types of strategies defined above.

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMIZING A PSN

THE PROVIDER ROLE

1. *Assessing and Communicating Own Needs*

   - Assist Provider organizations in clarifying their objectives as a basis for expanding their membership rolls. (technical assistance)
   - Assist Provider organizations in developing and implementing effective public information programs around their objectives. (public education)
   - Establish a pilot program to develop, test and disseminate a packet of materials which will aid Providers in performing self-assessments regarding their need for resources. (demonstration and pilot programs)

2. *Assessing and communicating the appropriateness or inappropriateness of resources*

   - Develop and disseminate a pamphlet or paper on the topic "How to Use a Consultant," which would provide a means by which Providers could learn to judge the usefulness of consultant assistance. (technical assistance)
   - Develop, as a part of the presently required child care/nursery school supervision courses, a curriculum unit on identifying andutilizing community resources. (community development)
   - Develop a mechanism which would enable Providers to provide an evaluation of the resources they have received by mailing an evaluation form to a central location when resources are received. (community development)

THE RESOURCE AGENT ROLE

1. *Assessing Provider needs*

   - Initiate an assessment of Provider needs to be conducted on a regular basis, for example annually, to determine the extent and location of actual needs of Providers in the county. (community development)

- By providing travel expense reimbursement, encourage Resource Agents to attend conferences, workshops and meetings of Providers, so that Resource Agents become better acquainted with the needs of Providers, and learn how to assess those needs more effectively. (community development)

2. *Determining appropriate delivery modes*

- Provide technical assistance to a major Resource Agency to aid in the development of a feedback/evaluation questionnaire to be filled out by Providers and to be collated and analyzed by the Resource Agent. (technical assistance)
- Develop and administer a survey to Providers to determine appropriate delivery modes. (technical assistance)
- Analyze the implicit and explicit policies of Resource Agents to determine the effect which funding, staffing, eligibility criteria and territorial limitation) have on the delivery of appropriate resources. (research and policy analysis)

3. *Identifying populations to be served*

- Analyze, with the purpose of delineating as clearly as possible, the policies of Resource Agents regarding their definitions of populations eligible for service, and provide this information to Providers and Facilitators. (research and policy analysis)
- Establish a task force to analyze the funding policies of all sources of child care funds in the counties with the purpose of determining how those policies affect the provision of resources to Providers, the allocation of resources within the county and the barriers to changing the allocation pattern. (research and policy analysis)

4. *Promoting availability of resources*

- Develop and distribute to all Providers a directory of resources available to them as Providers, and develop a regular updating process for this directory within a single agency in the county. (community organization; public education)
- Hold regular (for example, semi-annual) "Resource Fairs" at which Resource Agents would make presentations regarding the resources they have available to Providers. (public education)
- Write a regular column on resources available to Providers, which would be published in all newsletters going to the child care community. (public education)

THE FACILITATION ROLE

1. *Identifying Resource Agents of potential use to Providers*

   - Utilizing all local social service directories, contact all agencies which might conceivably have resources available to Providers, even though such resources may not be listed as such. Determine whether the resources available from each of these agencies are applicable to Provider needs. (research and policy analysis)

2. *Assessing Resource Agents as to potential use by Providers*

   - Collect all available written descriptions of resources available from social service agencies in the county and examine this material with the purpose of assessing whether the resources described are of potential use to Providers. (research and policy analysis)

3. *Advising/notifying Providers of Resource Agent availability*

   - Write and publish a newsletter describing available Resource Agents. (public information)
   - Establish and publicize a single telephone number by which Providers can obtain information on available Resource Agents. (community organization; public information)

4. *Assessing and interpreting Provider needs*

   - Develop and implement a program to train Facilitators in inter-personal communication techniques in order to help them better elicit Provider need statements. (training and technical assistance)
   - Institute regular (e.g., quarterly) meetings between principal Facilitators, and Provider organizations with the specific focus of assessing and interpreting Provider needs. (community organization)

5. *Assessing appropriateness of Resource Agent modes of resource delivery*

   - Establish routine call-back procedures for Facilitators so that they will check with Providers whom they assisted to determine whether both the referral made and resources received were appropriate to the Provider's need. (community organization)

- Institute a regular column in all Newsletters going to the child care community which would provide answers to queries from Providers and provide an opportunity for Providers to comment on the manner in which they received resources. (public education)

THE NETWORK MANAGER ROLE

1. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Providers in PSN*

   - Establish regular orientation meetings for potential Providers which would provide information regarding not only licensing but also resources available to Providers, and names of Facilitators and how to best use them. (public education)
   - Initiate publicity campaign aimed at generating new Providers. (public education)

2. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Resource Agents in PSN*

   - After compiling a resource directory focusing on Provider needs, mail the directory to all potential Resource Agents listed with a request that they indicate whether they would like continued inclusion in the directory. (public education)
   - After completing an assessment of Provider needs and an inventory of resources available, establish a task force to analyze any indicated gaps with the purpose of making specific recommendations as to how to proceed to develop Resource Agents to fill those gaps. (research and policy analysis)

3. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Facilitators*

   - Compile a roster of all individuals and agencies in the county which are performing facilitation functions, listing name, address, phone number and areas of special expertise. Circulate this roster among those listed. (public education)

4. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Network Managers in the PSN.*

   - Hold a workshop of key actors in the child care community with the purpose of explaining the PSN and the optimizing process. From this, identify specific individuals and agencies already performing and/or wishing to become involved in performing Network Manager functions. (training and technical assistance; community organization)

5. *Developing and/or improving communication among Providers*

   - Hold regular meetings of heads of Provider organizations to discuss organizational agendas and potential joint ventures. (community organization)
   - Arrange for Provider organizations in the communtiy to jointly sponsor workshops which would inform members of each category of Providers about the needs and services of other categories of Providers. (public education)

6. *Developing and/or improving communication among Resource Agents*

   - Institute regular meetings of Resource Agents to discuss problems in the field. This can be done by area of interest such as health or nutrition. (public education)
   - Mediate negotiations between Resource Agents engaged either in duplicated services or in conflict over territorial or population definitions. (technical assistance)

7. *Developing and/or improving communication among Facilitators*

   - After developing a procedure for Facilitators to call back Providers and record the feedback responses, establish regular meetings among Facilitators to review those responses. (community organization)

8. *Developing and/or improving communication among Network Managers*

   - Establish regular meetings of individuals engaged in performing Network Manager functions. (community organization)

9. *Collating, coordinating and analyzing assessment activities*

- Establish a task force with the purpose of coordinating assessment activities of Providers, Facilitators and Resource Agents by developing parallel instruments which will result in comparable results but still speak to specific agency or organization concerns. (research and policy analysis)

10. *Evaluating efficacy of Provider functions-modes*

- Assist a Provider organization in evaluating the efficacy of its organizational efforts. (technical assistance)
- Train boards and staffs of Provider organizations in evaluating their activities. (training)

11. *Evaluating efficacy of Resource Agent function-modes*

- Assist a Resource Agent in developing an on-going impact evaluation of its resource delivery system. (technical assistance)
- Assist a Resource Agent in developing or improving an internal monitoring and tracking process. (technical assistance)

12. *Evaluating efficacy of Facilitator function-modes*

- As part of a call-back procedure, whereby Facilitators can check with Providers as to the utility of the referral that was made, include questions pertaining to the satisfaction of the Provider with the mode of facilitation. (community organization)

13. *Evaluating efficacy of Network Manager function modes*

- Assist individual organizations performing Network Manager functions in evaluating the process and impact of those activities. (technical assistance)

14. *Assisting PSN entities in improving Provider function-modes*

- Assist a Provider organization in developing a public information program to publicize its activities. (technical assistance)
- Develop, publicize and hold regular public hearings at which Providers are encouraged to present testimony regarding their needs. (community organization; public education)

15. *Assisting PSN entities in improving Resource Agent function-modes*

- Establish a formal public review-and-comment procedure of all regulations issued by Resource Agents which affect the provision of resources to Providers. (community organization)
- Provide technical assistance and training to groups of Resource Agent personnel (e.g., public health nurses) on how to work effectively with Providers. (technical assistance)

16. *Assisting PSN entities in improving Facilitator function-modes*

- Institute regular meetings of Facilitators with the purpose of improving communication and sharing information among them. (community organization)
- Publish, at regular intervals, the phone numbers of Facilitators in the county in all the newsletters going to the child care community. (public education)

17. *Assisting PSN entities in improving Network Manager function-modes*

- Conduct a demonstration "Network Management Project" in a specific area of the county (e.g., a major city) with the purpose of examining existing Network Manager function-modes and exploring alternative modes through a cost-effectiveness analysis. (demonstration and pilot projects)

18. *Engaging in advocacy on behalf of PSN entities*

- Arrange agreements among PSN entities for the regular exchange of information regarding legislative, regulatory and funding issues. (technical assistance)
- Establish a county-wide Children's Lobby (or similar lobbying group) which will act as a clearinghouse for advocacy issues in child care. (Community organization)

THE NECESSITY OF A CHANGE AGENT

Optimizing a PSN clearly involves institutional and social change. In order for such change to begin, it is necessary that there be a change agent in the county. All of the strategies listed above are potential actions of a change agent, whether that agent be an individual, group, committee, consulting firm or department. The change agent can be an entity inside the PSN or outside. Each of these has particular advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages of utilizing as a change agent an entity which is a part of the PSN are clear. An existing agency (group or organization--the word "agency" will be used in this discussion to mean any of these possibilities) already has a "track record"--it has demonstrated some programmatic and organizational stability and competence. It is likely to have some credibility in the local community. Even though an existing agency may have to change the focus of some of its efforts, add staff or revise its view of its responsibilities, a structure already exists for doing this.

The disadvantages are also clear. Any existing agency in the county has past commitments to a particular philosophy or theory, to a particular target population, to address particular "problems" or "needs," or to provide particular kinds of service. The addition of a new focus, especially one of institutional change, might cause considerable strain both within the agency and within the community.

The advantages and disadvantages of utilizing an outside agency, such as a consulting firm or a state-level department, are almost directly the inverse of those associated with using an existing agency or group in the county. The outside agency does not usually have the same type of "track record" within the county, and its credibility rests almost entirely on the personal reputations of the individuals involved. In addition, it faces a certain amount of local chauvinism ("What do these outsiders know about <u>our</u> county?"), and a lack of explicit authority.

On the other hand, the outside agency has a great deal of freedom. It does not have commitments to a particular group or service. In terms of instituting social change, an outside agency can often say and do things to further that change which would be unacceptable from anyone but an outsider. Furthermore, an outside change agent can maintain a broader perspective on problems within a county, which is particularly helpful in addressing those problems and discovering solutions.

However, whether the active change agent to be employed is inside or outside, there are several conditions which must be met if the change agent is going to be successful:

- Until people are cognizant of a "problem" in their county, it is difficult to initiate any solid change. "People" in this case refers at least to key individuals in the PSN. It is thus often necessary to begin at the point of dealing with a few individuals and organizations in order to gain at least their agreement that "something needs to be done." This may involve only one agency or group, perhaps even one that is not directly a part of the PSN, but that is willing to take on the job of beginning the process.

- Once a change agent begins to work in the county, it is essential that the process which is initiated actively involves, as soon as possible, those individuals and groups which will have the responsibility for carrying forward any changes which occur. It has been URSA's experience that unless those who are responsible for implementing change are involved in the entire process of change, institutional change will be stillborn.

The change agent then has two important responsibilities:

- to secure the cooperation--active or tacit--of relevant PSN entities in the change process; and
- to promote an understanding of and support for the process of change in the county's PSN.

These responsibilities suggest, as does URSA's experience, that it is essential for a change agent to have an active advisory committee that has immediate credibility and stature in the community, as well as necessary social and political influence within the PSI to carry out the strategies outlined above.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A primary purpose of the contract to develop and implement a Provider Services Network in Santa Clara County was to provide the State Department of Education with guidance regarding the appropriateness, desirability and process of implementing a PSN in counties throughout the state.

URSA has stressed, from early in the contract, that a Provider Services Network exists in fact, if not in name, in every county in which child care is provided. The issue facing the State Department of Education, as URSA perceives it, is two-fold:

- Should the existing PSNs be optimized; and
- If so, what is an appropriate role of the department in such an optimizing process?

1. SHOULD THE EXISTING PROVIDER SERVICES NETWORKS BE OPTIMIZED?

"Provider Services Network" is a term which encompasses and describes the interrelationships within a community or county of those involved, directly and indirectly, in the provision of child care services. The focal point of the PSN is the provider of child care. The currency of the PSN is the money, people, information and materials which are needed by those providers in performing their child care duties. A PSN exists in every community by virtue of the fact that child care providers--just like other human services deliverers--can not exist in a vacuum, but must rely in varying degrees on a collection of licensing, health and financial resources.

An assumption which is presently made throughout the human service field is that the coordination and planning of resources results in better utilization of those resources, with the end product of an increase in the quality of the service provided. This assumption has been examined and tested in a variety of settings around the country over the past ten years, most notably in the health services field, and has been generally found to be viable.

In the arena of child care, this assumption has been implicit in federal policy since the late 'sixties and in the development of the Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) program. In California, this program had a significant impact, causing the development of a number of local child care coordinating groups, organizations, and agencies. The State Department of Education has funded three of these agencies since 1973, and funded twenty more in 1976, under the rubric of Resource and Referral programs, using state funds provided by AB 3059.

In 1974, the department sponsored Senate Bill 117, authored by Senator Milton Marks, which would have provided funds for "coordinating agencies" in all large counties. In 1975, the National Office of Child Development, HEW, awarded a two-year grant to the California Child Care Coordinating Council, a state-wide organization of local coordinating bodies. One of the purposes of this grant was to "build the capacity of the state to better plan and coordinate its services for children."

We recommend "optimizing county PSNs" as the next step in this progression of attempts to increase the effective utilization of resources in the field of child care.

2. WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE ROLE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE OPTIMIZING PROCESS?

A second assumption which has been implicit in the activities outlined above is that the responsibility for directing any change efforts must be at the local level. This, too, is an assumption which has been examined, tested and found to be viable. This assumption underlies the work of URSA in Santa Clara County and is a basis for the following recommendation:

The State Department of Education should continue to encourage and support the development and continued implementation of projects which have as their purpose increased communication among, and more effective resource utilization by, child care providers and other organizations, agencies and groups within a community or county. Furthermore, all efforts on the part of the department should be based on local community/county decision-making regarding the specific objectives of any such project.

Implementation of this recommendation involves, in URSA's opinion, the following:

- Support for the concept of optimizing a community Provider Service Network through the publication and dissemination of the handbook included with this final report. The handbook should be made available to appropriate state, regional and local child care and child care-support agencies who may be potential change agents on the county level. Dissemination should include, at least:
  - --The California Child Care Coordinators Council, for distribution to its member coordinating groups;
  - --All state and county child care licensing agencies; and
  - --All programs funded under AB 3059 which involve resource and referral components.

- Provision of on-going financial support for projects which are directed at optimizing a community's Provider Services Network. There are several possibilities for the funding of these PSN Optimization Projects:
  - --The department could support the introduction of legislation similar to SB 117 by Senator Marks, which would contain provisions for allocating funds on a proportional basis to counties throughout the state. The bill would contain language which would clarify the focus and purpose of the projects, and which would require that the funds would go to existing bodies if they can demonstrate understanding of and commitment to the optimization process;
  - --The department can utilize existing available funds, such as AB 3059, to initiate the optimization projects by contracting directly with local coordinating groups or with outside change agents, such as private consulting firms;
  - --The department can provide technical assistance to all interested counties in seeking funding to establish a PSN Optimization Project. Such technical assistance would need to include an education campaign to inform counties of the need for such a project and to advertise the support and services of the department in the establishment of the project.

V. A MANUAL TO OPTIMIZE A PSN

INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS A PROVIDER SERVICE NETWORK?

2. THE NECESSITY OF A CHANGE AGENT

3. THE OPTIMIZATION PROCESS

4. APPENDIX

INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL

As a means of increasing the efficiency and quality of child care services in the State of California, in 1973 the California Legislature mandated the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop and test a coordinated child care delivery system in a representative county in order to develop model programs and procedures for improving the delivery of child care services throughout the state. Santa Clara county was selected as the site for implementation of this model project. One part of the project was to develop and test a model Provider Services Network (PSN) capable of improving the availability of and coordinating the delivery of those resources that child care providers need to be effective in delivering their services to families.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the State Department of Education, regional or local child care coordinating agencies, with the information needed to develop a PSN Optimization Project in any county of the state similar to that conducted in Santa Clara County.

By following the steps outlined in this manual, the user will be able to:

- recognize the current status of the Provider Services Network in any county;
- identify agencies, organizations and individuals involved in a child care support system;
- examine the relationships between components of the systems;
- identify areas which require changes or strengthening;
- design and implement strategies to strengthen relationships in the system; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

This handbook is not a cookbook--it does not provide a detailed recipe for creating exact duplications of the Santa Clara PSN Optimization Project in other counties. It is based on an understanding that communities differ in terms of their needs; their priorities, and the human, technical and financial

resources available to them. It is to be expected, then, that projects in one county will differ from those in other counties. To this end, the handbook presents a theoretical and descriptive context for the project and then proceeds through nine basic implementation tasks, including examples from the Santa Clara experience and providing the user with a step-by-step approach to optimizing the PSN in any county.

1. WHAT IS A PROVIDER SERVICES NETWORK?

A. AN EXAMPLE FROM SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Santa Clara County, California, encompasses 1300 square miles. Over half of this area is uninhabited mountains. The remainder is a combination of rich farmland and urban areas. There are thirteen principalities, ranging from Los Altos Hills, population 25,000 to San Jose, population 521,100. In the county, there are 163,000 families with 329,000 children under the age of 15 years. At least 25,000 of these children are in some form of licensed child care, and another estimated 5,000 are in unlicensed child care. This care is provided by 2,000 licensed family day care homes and over 350 child care centers. Most of the money spent on child care in the county is paid by individual families. The remainder comes from a variety of sources such as federal, state, county and city governments, and foundations.

Child care Providers in Santa Clara County need and utilize a variety of resources. These resources come in a variety of forms, ranging from technical assistance in the licensing process to information about health screening and new legislation. Providers get these resources by contacting someone who can provide them (Resource Agents) or by asking someone who knows and who can provide them (Facilitators). Providers do not obtain resources, because they do not know who to ask for them, the resources are not available, or they do not know what to ask for.

Asking for and receiving (or not receiving) resources appears at first to be a random process in Santa Clara County. On closer inspection, however, definite patterns begin to emerge. Many Providers have regular contact with the same Facilitator. Facilitators build up regular information on Resource Agents who are available to Providers. Resource Agents attempt to determine what Providers need, and Providers attempt to express some of their needs through organizing themselves.

What initially seemed to be a set of random activities actually constitutes a system or a network. This network--which for the sake of a single label we call the Santa Clara County Child Care Provider Services Network (or PSN)--includes Providers, Facilitators and Resource Agents.

In addition to the activities of these elements which directly relate to the provision of resources, there are also activities going on which relate to the maintenance and enhancement of the PSN itself. Provider organizations work to increase their membership. Facilitators work to identify other Facilitators and increase communication with them. Resource Agents look for and receive assistance in improving the ways they deliver their resources. These various functions--overall coordination, evaluation, assessment, advocacy and assistance--we have grouped together and termed "Network Management Functions."

Some organizations, agencies or individuals may perceive of their roles in the PSN as Network Managers. For example, in Santa Clara County the 4Cs perceives its role as a central coordinating agency in the county. Thus it consciously involves itself in communication, coordination and planning activities involving child care Providers, Facilitators and Resource Agents.

In addition, a range of individuals and agencies may engage in one or several Network Management activities and thus perform Network Management functions without being aware of it. For example, the Family Day Care Home Association in Santa Clara County is actively involved in recruiting new members into its organization. They may or may not perceive that they are also involving new members in a PSN, but by virtue of bringing a family day care home Provider into an organization of Providers that serves as a Provider advocate and representative in the overall child care delivery system, they are also involving that Provider in the PSN.

Although we could think of Providers, Resource Agents, Facilitators, and Network Managers as specific individuals or groups who have specific jobs in the PSN, it is much more useful to think of them as different roles that most members of the PSN play at different times. For example, people who operate child care centers function as Providers most of the time, but at other times they serve as Resource Agents for directors of new centers who need assistance in getting

Those centers into operation, as Facilitators who relay information about Resource Agents to other Providers (and vice versa), and as Network Managers who participate in county-wide child care planning and coordinating activities.

Hence we will focus not on individuals or organizations, but on the four roles in the PSN:

- Provider
- Resource Agent
- Facilitator
- Network Manager

B. THE PSN AS A MODEL

What we are calling a PSN is merely an attempt to describe the reality of the inter-relationships between and among child care Providers, and the individuals and organizations which provide resources to them in their work. The PSN, as a model, applies to all counties, and is a way of analyzing the relationships in any county. A description of the Santa Clara County PSN is substantially different in content from that of, say, the San Bernadino County PSN. The two descriptions, however, are alike in form and structure. This means there is a close similarity in the processes which are going on in the two counties. We can apply some general strategies, (e.g. technical assistance or public education) for changing these processes if we wish. Whatever strategy is applied in a particular county will take the form of a tactic, involving specific people in agencies in specific activities vis-a-vis relationships specific to that county.

In other words, the following discussion will tell us what a PSN will look like, in form and structure, in any county, the kinds of entities which will be involved and the ways in which the functioning of a PSN can be improved or optimized. How to analyze a particular county--and how we analyzed Santa Clara County--will be the subject of a later section.

Our purpose, then, is to elucidate forms, structures and processes which will assist someone in replicating optimizing strategies in any county. Replication is not duplication. The process of replication includes "customization" and adaptation to fit the needs of particular groups in the political, social or economic circumstances of particular communities.

C. COMPONENTS OF THE PSN MODEL

Providers are individuals or groups of individuals who care for children (age 0-18) other than, but possibly in addition to, their own children for less than 24 hours a day. There are two basic types of child care Providers: family day care homes (FDCH) and child care centers.

A family day care home is a private home which is used as the facility for the care of children, and in which at least one of the owners (or renters) of the home is the responsible care-giver. The number of children cared for is usually less than 12. Licensure is usually required, but not in all states, for example, Arizona. By most informed estimates, FDCH's provide the bulk of available child care. Public funds are sometimes used to subsidize children in FDCH's.

A child care center is a type of child care in which a facility other than a private home is used for the care of children. The number of children cared for is usually in excess of 12. Licensure or accreditation is required in all states to insure the quality of the facility and care. Child care centers can be divided into several categories, including the following:

- Public child care centers
- Private non-profit child care centers
- Private for-profit child care centers
- Cooperative centers, or centers operated by child care associations

The typology presented here is based on administrative and organizational features, not on program content. So Head Start Programs, for example, are conducted in public child care centers, and centers that specialize in caring for mentally retarded children may be funded and administered either publicly or privately. The distinctions between the various types of child care Providers are important, since many Providers' needs are related to this typology.

In the context of a PSN, one of the major roles of a Provider is to use the resources that are available to it. In order to do this on an on-going basis a Provider must:

- assess its needs
- identify Resource Agents that can meet the needs
- communicate its needs to the Resource Agent
- obtain and utilize its resources
- assess and communicate the appropriateness of the resources that it receives and uses

When this process breaks down, Providers lack the resources they need, use inappropriate resources, compete wastefully for resources that are well known, and eventually cease to function as effective members of a county-wide child care delivery system. We shall return to the central problem of matching needs with resources after we introduce the other components of a PSN.

Resource Agents are agencies, organizations, individuals or groups of individuals who deliver--or are capable of delivering--resources to child care Providers or groups of child care Providers. Resource Agents, therefore, can include federal and state agencies, local public and private agencies, educational institutions, advocacy groups, private agencies, private sector organizations, voluntary organizations, consultants, other child care providers, and parents.

There are six basic kinds of resources that Resource Agents can distribute to increase the ability of Providers to operate better child care programs. They are:

- financial resources in the form of fees, grants, loans or donations
- information and research data
- human resources in the form of volunteer or paid staff, consultants, professional experts or para-professionals
- program or administrative materials that are donated or shared
- advocacy in the form of organizational assistance, legislative lobbying, media representation
- moral support in the form of contact with other Providers

Some Resource Agents are child care specific; that is, they provide resources only to child care Providers (4C for example); while other Resource Agents (such as public health nurses) provide support to non-child care organizations as well.

In addition, some Resource Agents are "single purpose" agencies that provide only one type of resource or service, such as information or training; while others provide a wider range of support services and resources. Other Resource Agents provide resources only within delineated service areas, while others provide resources without regard to geography, but limit services to specific target populations or to providers serving such populations.

In the context of a PSN the major roles of a Resource Agent are to allocate and distribute the resources that it controls. In order to do this effectively, a Resource Agent must

- assess its own resources
- identify eligible population to receive resources
- assess the needs of child care Providers who are eligible to receive its resources
- allocate its resources to Providers
- determine and employ appropriate means to deliver its resources to selected Providers
- assess the appropriateness of the resources which are used by Providers

This process complements the activities of child care Providers when they function as users of resources within a PSN.

Facilitators are agencies, organizations, individuals or groups of individuals who function to facilitate contact between Resource Agents and Providers in need of particular resources. Facilitators must have a knowledge of both needs and resources, and an ability to help Providers and Resource Agents to communicate with each other.

Some Facilitators are "generalists" who deal with most or all aspects of child care throughout a geographic area, (e.g. in a particular city), while other Facilitators focus on linkages involving particular types of needs or resources, such as health resources or resources related to facility planning or rehabilitation.

Facilitators may be formally assigned to the facilitation role by their agencies or organizations, or an entire agency or organization might formally assume a coordinative or facilitative role in a PSN. However, Facilitators often "emerge" and function in the facilitation role informally and in addition to their other functions or duties.

Since a major role of a Facilitator is to serve as a link between Providers and Resource Agents, a Facilitator must do the following:

- identify Resource Agents of potential use to Providers;
- assess and interpret Resource Agents' eligibility criteria;
- assess the needs of Providers;
- assist Providers to contact and communicate effectively with appropriate Resource Agents; and
- assess appropriateness of Resource Agents' function modes

This process is intermediate between, and overlaps with, the ones previously described for Providers and Resource Agents.

On the one hand, Providers, Resource Agents, and Facilitators are <u>people and</u> organizations which together comprise a PSN. On the other hand, delivering services, allocating and distributing resources, and establishing effective communications are <u>activities</u> which occur among individuals and organizations, and it is these activities which integrate the individuals and organizations to yield a PSN. From the latter point of view, it is the activities rather than the components that allow us to refer to a group as a "network" rather than as a "collection" or an "assortment."

In order to function as a network, several functions must be accomplished link together the various elements of a child care delivery system. In addition to communication among individuals in a PSN, overall coordination, evaluation, maintenance, management, advocacy and assistance are necessary for the optimal functioning of each element involved in child care delivery. These network management functions include:

- identifying and involving new Providers, Resource Agents and Facilitators in the PSN
- developing and/or improving communication among Providers, among Resource Agents, Among Facilitators, and among those performing Network Management Roles.
- collating, coordinating and analyzing assessment activities
- evaluating the efficacy of Provider, Resource Agent, Facilitator and Network Management function-modes
- assisting PSN entities in improving Provider, Resource Agent, Facilitator and Network Management function-modes; and
- engaging in advocacy on behalf of PSN entities

The efficiency and effectiveness with which a network operates as a comprehensive service delivery system depends, in large part, on the skill with which activities are planned and coordianted on a community-wide basis. Generally speaking, these are the tasks which people perform in their roles as Network Managers.

D. OPTIMIZING A PROVIDER SERVICES NETWORK

Provider Services Networks often do not operate at peak efficiency and effectiveness. In particular, some important functions may not be performed by any component of the network, i.e. there are gaps in the system, and at the same time, other functions may be performed redundantly by two or more components, i.e. there are unnecessary duplications. By "optimizing" a PSN, we mean insuring that gaps and unnecessary duplications do not occur.

In some situations, absence or duplication of activities is very clearcut. For example, no one in Santa Clara County currently monitors and evaluates the performance of network management functions in the PSN; hence there is a conspicuous gap in the system. Conversely, both the Family Day Care Association

and Palo Alto Community Child Care activity seek to involve new Providers in the PSN; hence, there is a duplication of activities that causes conflict between the two organizations.

In other situations, functions may be performed, but at such low level of effectiveness and efficiency that, for all practical purposes, they seem not to be performed at all. For example, Providers are aware of some of the resources that are available to them, but not one has systematically compiled a comprehensive directory of resources in Santa Clara County. Hence, Providers' access to resources is seriously limited by their general (but not complete) lack of information in this area. This deficiency constitutes an effective gap in the system, even though the absence of information is not as absolute as the absence of a monitor of network management functions.

A barrier to optimal functioning is anything which constrains, impedes or otherwise limits the performance of a PSN function. Exogenous barriers over which members of a PSN have little control include such things as budget cuts by funding sources, and rigidly defined operating procedures imposed by regulatory agencies.

However, many barriers to optimal PSN functioning are endogenous and are subject to intervention at the local level. They include failure to recognize that problems and needs exist, lack of communication among components of a PSN, and inappropriate use of available resources.

There are five overall strategies that can be used either singly or in combination to increase the extent to which a PSN operates in an optimal manner. All require the assignment of specific responsibility for implementation, the allocation of sufficient resources and authority, and the development of realistic time frames if there is to be any real improvement in a PSN's functional competence. All are applicable to endogenous barriers, and some may be used to deal with exogenous barriers as well.

The five strategies are the following:

1) Organizational assistance (or community organization). This strategy involves organizing new agencies or groups or strengthening existing agencies or organizations. In the case of a PSN, this strategy might be employed to develop any or all of the following: an entity responsible for network management; an organization representing the interests of providers; a coordinating group of Resource Agents; or a child care advocacy group.

2) Demonstration and pilot programs. This strategy involves designing and implementing model programs, or program elements, of limited scope or size in order to provide in vitro demonstrations of programmatic feasibility or the feasibility of various processes and methods. Using this strategy effectively requires developing a careful plan for disseminating findings and implementing proven elements of the program, process, or method throughout the system.

   In the case of a PSN, this strategy might be used to develop and demonstrate exemplary assessment modes, resource delivery or facilitation modes, or mechanisms for coordinating network efforts.

3) Training and technical assistance. This strategy involves providing training or technical assistance to selected members of various network components in order to modify attitudes, or increase specific skills or competencies. The term "training" is used to refer to a formal process of structured experiences that usually involves a group of trainees with similar needs. Technical assistance, on the other hand, refers to a less formal process for developing skills or capabilities of an individual or group. Technical assistance may be delivered to a group with common needs but it is often individualized and consists of demonstrations, examples, or advice and consultation related to the specific, and usually immediately pertinent, needs of those receiving it.

   In the case of a PSN, training and technical assistance might be used as methods for disseminating findings of demonstrations or pilot programs; for limited skill-building purposes such as instructions on how to

complete a particular application or reporting form required by a Resource Agent or a regulatory or licensing agency; or for broad skill areas such as raising funds, using needs assessment techniques, developing appropriate resource delivery modalities, or administering child care programs.

4) Research and policy analysis. This strategy involves conducting research aimed at defining both the explicit and implicit policies of an agency, organization, or group, and then describing and assessing the effects of such policies on other elements in the PSN. This strategy is often linked to other strategies. For example, research and policy analysis might lead to the development of a program which demonstrates different approaches to policy implementation, or to training or technical assistance aimed at modifying policies.

   In the case of a PSN, this strategy might be employed to analyze the effect of particular Resource Agents' policies on Providers.

5) Public education. This strategy involves disseminating information (particularly "processed" information as opposed to raw data) to the various "publics" that comprise, affect, or are affected by the PSN and/or child care delivery system.

   In the case of a PSN, public education might be used to develop broad support among the community for funding, among legislators for new regulations, among Resource Agents for a new system of priorities, or among Providers for introduction of new program content.

The particular strategies or sequences of strategies that are appropriate in any situation will depend on the type of barrier that the PSN is seeking to eliminate, the particular "target group," the PSN's priorities, the extent to which resistance is likely to be encountered, the PSN's past experience with the various strategies, and the availability of resources capable of effectively implementing the various strategies. Clearly, the tactics used to implement each strategy will also vary with the context in which implementation will occur.

There are many ways to use strategies to optimize specific PSN functions. Furthermore, any single strategy may be used to optimize more than one function, and several strategies may be combined to optimize a single function. The primary purpose of the following list of strategy possibilities is to give examples of how strategies might be used, rather than to indicate how they should be used in individual cases. Italicized statements are functions, roman statements are possible strategies, and parenthesized expressions refer to the types of strategies defined above.

E. POSSIBLE STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMIZING A PSN

THE PROVIDER ROLE

1. *Assessing and Communicating own needs*

   - Assist Provider organizations to clarify their objectives as a basis for expanding their membership rolls. (technical assistance)
   - Assist Provider organizations to develop and implement effective public information programs around their objectives. (public education)
   - Establish a pilot program to develop, test and disseminate a packet of materials which will aid Providers in performing self-assessments regarding their need for resources. (demonstration and pilot programs)

2. *Assessing and communicating the appropriateness or inappropriateness of resources*

   - Develop and disseminate a pamphlet or paper on the topic "How to Use a Consultant," which would provide a means by which Providers could learn to judge the usefulness of consultant assistance. (technical assistance)
   - Develop, as a part of the presently required child care/nursery school supervision courses, a curriculum unit on identifying and utilizing community resources. (community development)
   - Develop a mechanism which would enable Providers to evaluate their resources, by mailing an evaluation form to a central location when they receive resources. (community development)

THE RESOURCE AGENT ROLE

1. *Assessing Provider needs*

   - Initiate an assessment of Provider needs to be conducted on a regular basis, for example annually, to determine the extent and location of actual needs of Providers in the county. (community development)

- By providing travel expense reimbursement, encourage Resource Agents to attend conferences, workshops and meetings of Providers, so that Resource Agents become better acquainted with the needs of Providers, and learn how to assess those needs more effectively. (community development)

2. *Determining appropriate ways to deliver resources*

- Provide technical assistance to a major Resource Agency to aid in the development of a feedback/evaluation questionnaire to be filled out by Providers,and to be collated and analyzed by the Resource Agent. (technical assistance)
- Analyze the implicit and explicit policies of Resource Agents to determine the effect which funding, staffing, eligibility criteria and territorial limitation have on the delivery of appropriate resources. (research and policy analysis)

3. *Identifying populations to be served*

- Analyze policies of Resource Agents regarding their definitions of populations eligible for service, and provide this information to Providers and Facilitators. (research and policy analysis)
- Establish a task force to analyze the funding policies of all sources of child care funds in the counties in order to determine how those policies affect provision of resources to Providers, allocation of resources within the county, and barriers to changing the allocation pattern. (research and policy analysis)

4. *Promoting availability of resources*

- Develop and distribute to all Providers a directory of resources available to them as Providers, and develop a regular updating process for this directory within a single agency in the county. (community organization; public education)
- Hold annual or semi-annual "Resource Fairs" at which Resource Agents would make presentations regarding the resources they have available to Providers. (public education)

- Write a regular column on resources available to Providers, which would be published in all newsletters going to the child care community. (public education).

THE FACILITATION ROLE

1. *Identifying Resource Agents of potential use to Providers*

   - Utilizing all local social service directories, contact all agencies which might conceivably have resources available to Providers, even though such resources may not be listed as such. Determine whether the resources available from each of these agencies are applicable to Provider needs. (research and policy analysis)

2. *Advising/notifying Providers of Resource Agent availability*

   - Write and publish a newsletter describing available Resource Agents. (public information)
   - Establish and publicize a single telephone number by which Providers can obtain information on available Resource Agents. (community organization; public information)

3. *Assessing and interpreting Provider needs*

   - Develop and implement a program to train Facilitators in inter-personal communication techniques in order to help them better elicit Provider need statements. (training and technical assistance)
   - Institute regular (e.g., quarterly) meetings between principal Facilitators, and Provider organizations with the specific focus of assessing and interpreting Provider needs. (community organization)

4. *Assessing appropriateness of Resource Agent modes of resource delivery*

   - Establish routine call-back procedures for Facilitators so that they will check with Providers whom they assisted to determine whether both the referral made and resources received were appropriate to the Provider's need. (community organization)

- Institute a regular column in all Newsletters going to the child care community which would provide answers to queries from Providers and provide an opportunity for Providers to comment on the manner in which they received resources. (public education)

THE NETWORK MANAGER ROLE

1. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Providers in PSH*

   - Establish regular orientation meetings for potential Providers which would provide information regarding not only licensing but also resources available to Providers, and names of Facilitators and how to best use them. (public education)
   - Initiate publicity campaign aimed at generating new Providers. (public education)

2. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Resource Agents in PSH*

   - After compiling a resource directory focusing on Provider needs, mail the directory to all potential Resource Agents listed with a request that they indicate whether they would like continued inclusion in the directory. (public education)
   - After completing an assessment of Provider needs and an inventory of resources available, establish a task force to analyze any indicated gaps and make specific recommendations concerning ways to develop Resource Agents to fill those gaps. (research and policy analysis)

3. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Facilitators*

   - Compile a roster of individuals and agencies which are performing facilitation functions, listing name, address, phone number and areas of special expertise. Circulate this roster among those listed. (public education)

4. *Identifying and seeking to involve new Network Managers in the PSN.*

   - Hold a workshop of key actors in the child care community to explain the PSN and the optimizing process. From this, identify specific individuals and agencies already performing and/or wishing to become involved in performing Network Manager functions. (training and technical assistance; community organization)

5. *Developing and/or improving communication among Providers*

   - Hold regular meetings of heads of Provider organizations to discuss organizational agendas and potential joint ventures. (community organization)
   - Arrange for Provider organizations in the community to jointly sponsor workshops which would inform members of each category of Providers about the needs and services of other categories of Providers. (public education)

6. *Developing and/or improving communication among Resource Agents*

   - Institute regular meetings of Reosurce Agents to discuss problems in the field. This can be done by area of interest such as health or nutrition. (public education)
   - Encourage negotiations between Resource Agents who are unnecessarily duplicating services, or disputing territorial or population definitions. (technical assistance)

7. *Developing and/or improving communication among Facilitators*

   - After developing a procedure for Facilitators to call back Providers and record the feedback responses, establish regular meetings among Facilitators to review those responses. (community organization)

8. *Developing and/or improving communication among Network Managers*

   - Establish regular meetings of individuals engaged in performing Network Manager functions. (community organization)

9. *Collating, coordinating and analysing assessment activities*

- Establish a task force to coordinate assessment activities of Providers, Facilitators and Resource Agents by developing parallel instruments which will result in comparable results but still speak to specific agency or organization concerns. (research and policy analysis)

10. *Evaluating efficacy of Provider activities*

- Assist a Provider organization to evaluate the efficacy of its organizational efforts. (technical assistance)
- Train boards and staffs of Provider organizations to evaluate their activities. (training)

11. *Evaluating efficacy of Resource Agent activities*

- Assist a Resource Agent to develop an on-going impact evaluation of its resource delivery system. (technical assistance)
- Assist a Resource Agent to develop or improve an internal monitoring and tracking process. (technical assistance)

12. *Evaluating efficacy of Facilitator activities*

- As part of a call-back procedure, whereby Facilitators can check with Providers concerning the utility of the referral that was made, include questions pertaining to the satisfaction of the Provider with the mode of facilitation. (community organization)

13. *Evaluating efficacy of Network Management activities*

- Assist individual organizations to evaluate the process and impact of their Network Management activities.

14. *Assisting PSN entities to improve performance of Providers*

- Assist a Provider organization in developing a public information program to publicize its activities. (technical assistance)
- Develop, publicize and hold regular public hearings at which Providers are encouraged to present testimony regarding their needs. (community organization; public education)

15. *Assisting PSN entities to improve performance of Resource Agents*

- Establish a formal public review-and-comment procedure of all regulations issued by Resource Agents which affect the provision of resources to Providers. (community organization)
- Provide technical assistance and training to groups of Resource Agent personnel (e.g., public health nurses) on how to work effectively with Providers. (technical assistance)

16. *Assisting PSN entities to improve performance of Facilitators*

- Institute regular meetings of Facilitators with the purpose of improving communication and sharing information among them. (community organization).
- Publish, at regular intervals, the phone numbers of Facilitators in the county in all the newsletters going to the child care community. (public education).

17. *Assisting PSN entities to improve Network Management*

- Conduct a demonstration "Network Management Project" in a specific area of the county (e.g., a major city) to examine existing Network Management activities and explore alternative activities through a cost-effectiveness analysis. (demonstration and pilot projects)

18. *Engaging in advocacy on behalf of PSN entities*

- Arrange agreements among PSN entities for the regular exchange of information regarding legislative, regulatory and funding issues. (technical assistance)
- Establish a county-wide Children's Lobby (or similar lobbying group) which will act as a clearinghouse for advocacy issues in child care. (community organization)

2. THE NECESSITY OF A CHANGE AGENT

Optimizing a PSN clearly involves institutional and social change. In order for such change to begin, it is necessary that there be a change agent in the county. All of the strategies listed above are potential actions of a change agent, whether that agent be an individual, group, committee, consulting firm or department. The change agent can be an entity inside the PSN or outside. Each of these has particular advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages of utilizing as a change agent an entity which is a part of the PSN are clear. An existing agency (group or organization--the word "agency" will be used in this discussion to mean any of these possibilities) already has a "track record"--it has demonstrated some programmatic and organizational stability and competence. It is likely to have some credibility in the local community. Even though an existing agency may have to change the focus of some of its efforts, add staff or revise its view of its responsibilities, a structure already exists for doing this.

The disadvantages are also clear. Any existing agency in the county has past commitments to a particular philosophy or theory, to a particular target population, to address particular "problems" or "needs," or to provide particular kinds of service. The addition of a new focus, especially one of institutional change, might cause considerable strain both within the agency and within the community.

The advantages and disadvantages of utilizing an outside agency, such as a consulting firm or a state-level department, are almost directly the inverse of those associated with using an existing agency or group in the county. The outside agency does not usually have the same type of "track record" within the county, and its credibility rests almost entirely on the personal reputations of the individuals involved. In addition, it faces a certain amount of local chauvinism ("What do these outsiders know about <u>our</u> county?"), and a lack of explicit authority.

On the other hand, the outside agency has a great deal of freedom. It does not have commitments to a particular group or service. In terms of instituting social change, an outside agency can often say and do things to further that change which would be unacceptable from anyone but an outsider. Furthermore, an outside change agent can maintain a broader perspective on problems within a county, which is particularly helpful in addressing those problems and discovering solutions.

However, whether the active change agent to be employed is inside or outside, there are several conditions which must be met if the change agent is going to be successful:

- Until people are cognizant of a "problem" in their county, it is difficult to initiate any solid change. "People" in this case refers at least to key individuals in the PSN. It is thus often necessary to begin at the point of dealing with a few individuals and organizations in order to gain at least their agreement that "something needs to be done." This may involve only one agency or group, perhaps even one that is not directly a part of the PSN, but that is willing to take on the job of beginning the process.

- Once a change agent begins to work in the county, it is essential that the process which is initiated actively involves, as soon as possible, those individuals and groups which will have the responsibility for carrying forward any changes which occur. It has been URSA's experience that unless those who are responsible for implementing change are involved in the entire process of change, institutional change will be stillborn.

The change agent then has two important responsibilities:

- to secure the cooperation--active or tacit--of relevant PSN entities in the change process; and
- to promote an understanding of and support for the process of change in the county's PSN.

These responsibilities suggest, as does URSA's experience, that it is essential for a change agent to have an active advisory committee that has immediate credibility and stature in the community, as well as necessary social and political influence within the PSN to carry out the strategies outlined above. The stress here is on the word "active." The function of the group, which we have called a County Review Group, is really two-fold:

- to keep the change agent on track; and
- to become as closely involved as possible in the optimizing process.

The ultimate goal of the change agent is, through the optimizing process, to increase the overall communication, cooperation and delivery of resources in the PSN, so that child care services are of the highest possible quality, given the financial, human, and political resources available in the county.

3. THE OPTIMIZATION PROCESS

There are eight basic tasks to be performed in order to optimize a PSN. They are the following:

- Identifying the key actors in the county child care system;
- Establishing a County Review Group;
- Determining who performs which of the PSN functions;
- Analyzing current operations of the PSN;
- Designing alternative strategies and tactics;
- Choosing appropriate strategies and tactics;
- Implementing a final plan; and
- Evaluating the optimization project.

Task 1: Identify the Key Actors

"Key actors" are individuals who both have a knowledge of the county's child care system in all its various pieces and also have an understanding of its internal workings through their personal experience and contacts. They are individuals who are the key source of information about what has happened, is happening and is about to happen with child care in the county. Key actors are often:

- the leaders of Provider organizations;
- the directors of large child care programs;
- licensing workers;
- information and referral workers; or
- local community child care activists.

They are usually:

- very active within the local community;
- knowledgeable about who else is active in the community;
- involved with more than one group, often in more than one community;
- willing to share their information and expertise with others; and
- appear to have a commitment to working for positive social change in the community (though definitions of "positive" will vary greatly between key actors).

This task has two sub-tasks:

- identify key actors; and
- contact and interview key actors.

1.1: Identify Key Actors

The initial identification of key actors will differ depending on the previous knowledge of the change agent. An "outside" change agent needs to begin from scratch while an "inside" change agent will already be aware of the key actors in the county child care system. For both, however, the development of a list of key actors will also serve as a beginning basis for data collection on the structure and content of the PSN. The following steps are suggested to identify key actors:

- Locate any organizations of Providers in the county and find out who their members and the leaders are. Locate the licensing agency for child care providers and find out who the licensing workers and the leader of the agency is.
- In the county Department of Social Services, locate the unit that deals with child care services and identify who directs it. If there is a local child care coordinating group, identify the person in charge, as well as who the individual and agency members are.
- If there is a Head Start program, identify the person who heads it. Find out if the county office of education is involved in any child care. Determine whether the local school district administers children's center programs or state-preschool programs.
- As these names are collected, note those that appear more than once. In making calls to obtain the above types of information, be sure to ask the person you are talking with if they know others who might have the information you are looking for.

1.2: Contact and Interview Key Actors

This sub-task is closely integrated with the previous and both will be happening in approximately the same time frame. The change agent should contact potential key actors by phone or letter to explain the project and request an in-person

interview. The purpose of the interview and the amount of time requested should be made clear to the key actor.

The purpose of these interviews is for the change agent to get a broad understanding of the county's child care system. The interview should include, but need not be restricted to the following topics:

- description of major agencies and organizations dealing with child care services in the county;
- discussion of interviewee's role in the PSN;
- discussion of chief problems and barriers to providing quality child care in the county;
- discussion of interviewee's perceptions of the best strategies and mechanisms for building linkages between child care providers, agencies and resources;
- identification of other key actors --"who do you call when you need information or assistance?"; and
- identification of resource agents and the resources they provide.

These interviews are an opportunity to check out the perceptions of others who have been interviewed. Both facts and opinions need to be recorded because both are important parts of the fabric of the PSN.

At this point, it is important that the lists of possible Facilitators, Resource Agents and Network Managers be inclusive rather than exclusive. The lists will be refined and revised in later activities.

In URSA's experience, these interviews generally lasted between 15 minutes and half an hour. While some key actors were identified at later stages in the Santa Clara project, most were identified and interviewed in the first month of project effort. It is useful to develop a standard interview format as an aid in conducting and recording the interview.

Task 2: Establish a County Review Group

The role of a change agent is to improve the functioning of an existing system --the county's PSN. It is essential that the key actors in that system be given the opportunity to participate actively in that effort. Agencies,

organizations and the people who staff them will resist the effects of decisions (however beneficial) which change their operations on their support systems, unless they are involved in the decision-making process which authorizes such change. To avoid this potential resistance and to implement an acceptable and lasting process, it is important to establish a County Review Group (CRG). A CRG is an advisory body; it is a direction-setting body; and it is an implementing group.

2.1: The Purpose of the County Review Group

The overall purpose of the CRG is to enlist the participation and assistance of its members in the optimizing of the PSN. Its advisory function is to provide the change agent with a reality check:

- Am I asking the right question?
- Am I talking to the right people?
- What areas have I missed?
- Is the activity I have planned appropriate?
- Is the timing right for this activity?

The answers to these and similar questions will help the change agent to provide analysis and assistance which is useful in applying a model to the particular situation in a county.

The CRG direction-setting function is to provide the change agent with consensus-based decisions on direction and focus of optimizing efforts. Development of consensus within any group requires time and careful handling on the part of the change agent. It is essential that questions presented to the group for decision have substance. For example, "Is it appropriate to have a meeting of Providers?" gives the chance for direction-setting, whereas "when we have the meeting of Providers, should we serve lunch?" is question of less substance and need not involve an advisory board.

The implementing function of the County Review Group is to provide the change agent with a means of increasing the probability of success with optimizing strategies. Through the involvement of those who will be affected

by those strategies. In addition, particularly in the case of an outside change agent, the CRG can become the overseer of further implementation when the change agent leaves the county. This function of the CRG can help assure that optimization is a process that continues.

2.2: Select a County Review Group

The roster of potential key actors developed in Task 1 will serve as the basis for the selection of CRG members. The following criteria may be used to determine members of the CRG:

- Considerable experience in the county's child care system. Members of the CRG should know how the county child care system operates and who is vital to its operation. Long term experience is usually necessary for a person to have a good sense of the community.
- Experience as a Provider, Resource Agent or Facilitator and involvement in some Network Management functions. An overall mix of the various roles (Resource Agents, Facilitators, etc.), is important on the CRG, although a specific quota is not necessary.
- Willingness to work as a CRG member is probably the most important criteria. There is a tendency in convening advisory groups, especially in the human services fields, to include only the directors or administrators of agencies. While this may appear essential to the purpose of the group, the functioning of such groups often becomes stymied by absenteeism or the delegation of group responsibility to a subordinate. The purpose of convening a CRG is to organize a group of people who are willing to take the time and expend the energy needed to make the project work. Hence, issues of commitment should take precedence over issues of position.
- All factions need to be represented on the CRG. If an interest group or primary child care agency is not represented on the CRG, their lack of involvement may block the success of the project.

Other criteria may be added, reflecting conditions specific to a county. For example, in Santa Clara County, where a major child care study had been in progress for several years, it was important to add the criteria of previous involvement with that study's advisory committee. One person on the change agent staff should have responsibility for contacting and convening the CRG, because

- it helps maintain a certain continuity in the selection process; and
- a common contact among the members can facilitate the first few meetings of the group, particularly in situations when all group members may not know each other well and may be wary of each other's interest.

In Santa Clara, certain people were continually mentioned by others as important potential CRG members. This became a criteria for selection--to be cited by other potential members as a good choice for membership.

An effective CRG should not be larger than fifteen members altogether. Groups larger than fifteen members often result in difficult group dynamics which hamper good discussion, consensus decision-making and working sessions.

2.3: Prepare for Initial Meeting

The first step in preparing for the initial meeting of a CRG is to arrange for appropriate and convenient facilities and meeting time. Most agency personnel will likely prefer meetings during regular working hours, but child care providers will probably need to be reimbursed in order to have a substitute during these hours. Public agencies, community organizations and charity organizations often have free or inexpensive facilities.

An orientation packet including a project description and background, a list of CRG members and a meeting agenda should be sent to all CRG members previous to the meeting. In URSA's experience in Santa Clara County, meetings normally lasted between two and three hours. Members of the CRG often used these

meetings to exchange news with each other and "swap stories" about the child care system. In order to focus the meetings on the agenda, URSA allowed for a regular social break in each meeting--either a coffee break or lunch.

At a later time, the group may decide they want to have formal membership, by-laws and officers. But at this stage the group should be informal. This will make it easier for members to drop out and for new members to be added. It will make the running of the meetings easier, and will allow for an evolution in the CRG function and process. Members are most important for what they can contribute, and less important as representatives of a particular group or point of view. Keeping the organization informal allows people to act more freely as individuals rather than as group represenatives.

Meetings should be planned one at a time as they are needed. Sometimes a group wants to meet regularly, other times a group would rather break into sub-groups to do work, coming back as a whole only occasionally. These decisions can be made as necessary.

Taking and distributing minutes of the meetings is an activity that must be examined carefully. One of the important group dynamic elements to develop is trust within the group. This is an important first step in developing a consensus decision-making process. Minutes of meetings that record every comment and statement can inhibit the development of trust among group members. If the minutes of meetings are to be disseminated in the community, some members may refrain from speaking freely. On the other hand, it is often useful for members to review what decisions were made at a previous meeting. The change agent needs to develop a recording mechanism which will best suit the needs of a particular group. This may include a staff person whose role is to record decision-making, it may include tape recording all meetings, or it may be best suited for all CRG members to take their own notes.

2.4: Convene the First CRG Meeting

The first meeting of the CRG is important because it:

- can set the tone for how the group will function;

- is the time for the change agent to state expectations of how the group will be useful; and
- can offer a forum at which individuals can communicate their expectations for this project and frustrations over past attempts to get things done.

It is important at this first meeting to state reasonable goals for what is planned and expected to be accomplished at the meeting. If there is disagreement, a change of focus may be necessary. This will help set the tone for how the group will function, and will make it easier for the group to develop a decision-making role as time goes on.

Introduce all CRG members and change agent staff, and review the basic concepts in the PSN model. The purpose of the PSN model is to help organize and analyze information so that the change agent and the CRG can, ultimately, make choices and implement actions to strengthen their county network. The picture of the county's PSN is dictated, not by the model, but by the reality of what exists in the county. The more a group understands the model, the better and more useful a tool it becomes. At the close of the first meeting, plan a date for the next meeting.

2.5: Continuing Meetings

The CRG will be most useful in the optimizing process, if the change agent not view group meetings as the only vehicle for communication with group members. Relying solely on group meetings as a vehicle will likely result in frustration of some members and will also tend to isolate the optimizing process from the rest of what is happening in the county.

On the other hand, it is important that there be continuity for the CRG and regular meetings are an effective way of helping to establish this continuity. Meetings should be called whenever decisions need to be made, whenever a new aspect of the project is about to begin, and to review all data collection efforts. Individuals on the CRG may be contacted by the change agent whenever reality-checks, consulations or assistance is needed.

Task 3: Determine Who Performs Which PSN Functions

Before areas of weakness in a PSN can be identified, or strategies designed, it is necessary to determine who performs which PSN functions and identify whether there are PSN functions that are not performed at all. This is basically a data collection and analysis task.

3.1: Review Data Already Collected

In identifying key actors and establishing a CRG, some data has already been collected that describes the PSN in a county. This data needs to be formalized and systemized. The first step is to collect information on each child care agency or organization already identified. Phone calls and literature searches are the best means of initial data collection about agencies. Find out:

- What are they doing in the area of child care, according to their bylaws, charter and funding mandates? Translate this information into the terms of the PSN model: are they primarily a Resource Agent, Facilitator or Provider, or more than one of these.
- What are their stated limitations--geographic, financial, or specific philosophical commitments?
- How many people are involved in the agency? Are they volunteer or paid, full-time or part-time? Does their work in the child care area take priority or a secondary role to other tasks they do?

Develop a standard interview format to facilitate this data collection. In Santa Clara County, these data collection phone calls took between fifteen and twenty minutes per interview, but several preparatory calls were needed to establish who to speak with and to reach that person in their office. In some agencies, a secretary or receptionist may be able and willing to answer these questions. In others, public relations, personnel or administrators, may prefer to be interviewed.

3.2: Organize Data and Check Data Needs

After this initial data is collected regarding already identified agencies, begin to categorize the information into the PSN categories according to model roles. Identify data gaps by checking the questions below. Determine what information is still needed. The following provides a checklist against which one can determine what information is lacking.

PROVIDERS

- What kind and how many different Provider organizations are there?
- What is the main focus of their activities?
- What level of communication do they have with each other and with the non-child care world?
- What part--both number and type--of the whole Provider group is involved with those organizational activities?
- How many of those Providers are licensed and, if licensed, what role does the licensing agency play in provider relationships with each other?
- What is the history of trying to organize child care Providers in that county?

RESOURCE AGENTS

- Who are the principal Resource Agents?
- What level of communication exists among the Resource Agents and between them and the Provider organizations?
- What activities have those Resource Agents engaged in which involved Provider's specifically (such as child care conferences)?
- What are the principal type of resources, such as technical assistance on printed information?
- What some of the major barriers are to delivery of resources in the county, such as territorality?

FACILITATORS

- Who and where are they?
- How do people know about them?
- What the level of communication is among them?

NETWORK MANAGERS

- How much talk there is in the child care community about coordination and cooperation?
- Who sees themselves--either groups or individuals--as taking a "coordinating" role?
- Which groups are communicating (or not communicating) with each other--and on what kinds of issues?

Check the answers with the CRG. Their knowledge of the county child care system will provide clarification where necessary, and can fill out areas of partial information.

3.3: Develop appropriate Data Collection Techniques

There are a variety of data collection techniques that may be useful in eliciting information regarding PSN roles and functions. Surveys are useful for collecting identification data and the relations among the components of the PSN. Surveys can be large scale or limited. They do not necessarily have to involve expenditures of time or money on either the interviewer's or interviewee's part.

In Santa Clara County, we conducted surveys at both ends of the time/cost spectrum:

- We administered a 15-minute phone questionnaire to a representative sample of over 150 Providers to determine which were the principal Facilitators in the county; and
- We administered a personal exploratory-question personal interview to approximately 15 people to determine the relationships among the principal Network Managers in the county.

Both gave us results which were extremely useful in describing the Santa Clara PSN. The Santa Clara County Review Group was invaluable to us. Their assistance was used in the beginning in helping us design our questionnaires, identify problems in eliciting cooperation from interviewees, and in selecting

the best target for our questions. It helped us particularly to understand the data we had collected. Samples of data collection tools used in Santa Clara County appear in the appendix to this report. Assistance in designing data collection tools and strategies may be available in the faculty of local community colleges or universities or by consulting companies. The CRG should be involved in identifying sources of data and in guiding the methods of eliciting responses.

3.4: Report Findings to the CRG

The data is only useful as an aid for decision-making. The change agent should report findings of all data collection efforts to the County Review Group. These findings are best presented in a report or presentation relating the information to the roles and functions of a model PSN. Some information may be offered as confidential; other information may need to be "carefully" presented if it deals with problems between groups. However, all the information will serve as a basis for later strategy designs and choices, and therefore needs to be available to the CRG and key decision makers in involved agencies. The CRG should be used as a "reality-check" on information collected. By sending a report to CRG members a week before a meeting, the change agent can plan for in-depth, thoughtful discussion of the accuracy and implications of the data.

Task 4: Analyze Current Operations of the PSN

Analysis of the data collected in the previous step should focus on identifying gaps in PSN functions, population gaps, unnecessary duplication of efforts, inefficiency or ineffectiveness of functions, mapping the types of relationships (formal, informal, close, distant, etc.) between groups, and pinpointing causes of communication problems where they exist. The change agent has responsibility for the initial analysis of data.

4.1: Identify Gaps and Unnecessary Duplications

The definition of an optimally functioning PSN is a system where all PSN functions are performed appropriately for all populations within the PSN. The simplest method of identifying gaps and unnecessary duplications is to

take the list of PSN functions (presented earlier in this manual) and fill in for each function who performs it for which population. Those functions which are not performed at all should be compiled on one list. On another, list those functions that are being performed for the same geographical or population area by different organizations. These may or may not be unnecessary duplications depending on the need for those services. The CRG should be given an opportunity to review these lists, to offer their insight into problems or barriers which result in gaps or unnecessary duplications, and to clarify and verify the accuracy of the lists.

In Santa Clara, gaps and unnecessary duplications occurred less often than the problems of inefficient functioning or partial functioning. For example, a needs assessment for providers was conducted but the design of the questions asked and the sampling method resulted in a needs assessment of limited usefulness. Although inefficiency is more subtle than gaps and duplications, it is essential to identify. A work session involving CRG members may be useful.

4.2: Prioritize Action Areas/Intervention Points

The responsibility for prioritizing action areas and deciding upon intervention points should jointly belong to the change agent and the CRG. The decision is basically, "Which of weaknesses in the PSN is it most vital and practical to approach first?" A brainstorming and work session with the CRG is the best method for determining these areas. A long meeting should be scheduled to allow for an intensive discussion focussing, first, on the importance of an issue to address, and, second, on the practicality and probability of arriving at a solution to the issue. The change agent should take responsibility for guiding the CRG and reminding its members that in order to choose realistic priorities, the persuasiveness of a problem must be weighed against the probability of success in alleviating that problem. Thus, the realistic limitations of funding, licensure requirements, geographic barriers, etc. may make certain problems "unsolveable" at a given time.

Task 5: Design Implementation Strategies

The design of alternative strategies or tactics for optimizing a county's PSN is best done by the change agent with priority direction provided by the CRG. The five general types of strategies or tactics are technical assistance, public education, community organization, research and policy analysis, and pilot demonstrations. They are discussed in Section 1 of this manual along with suggested specific tactics for utilizing those strategies in optimizing a PSN.

In the design of strategies, it is necessary for the change agent to:

- identify individuals or agencies who will be targets of the strategies; and
- identify individuals or agencies who need to be involved in implementing the strategies.

Include in the planning stages representations of groups who will be the targets or who need to be involved in implementation. This will insure that the interest of those to be affected are represented and will allow specific implementation problems to surface (i.e. financial barriers). It is likely that most of these groups will have a member on the CRG already. However, if they are not yet "represented," invite a key actor in that group to join the CRG at this time. A small working group of CRG members should be selected to work with the change agent in generating and designing implementation strategies. This group should work towards developing a range of alternative strategies which are appropriate to each intervention point. They can select, for example, types of technical assistance or educational technique which would be viable in each instance. The best alternative strategies should be as inclusive and imaginative as possible. Discussion should involve, however, an analysis of the benefits and costs of all proposed strategy alternatives. Some may be financially unfeasible or staff resources may not be available and, hence, a proposed strategy may have to be discarded and another designed.

Task 6: Select Strategies

The most important criteria in the selection of strategies are determined by priority areas of need; appropriateness of a strategy to goals; feasibility of implementing the strategy taking into account receptivity of key agencies, staff and financial resources. These decisions are best made jointly by the CRG and the change agent. For most efficient use of the CRG, the change agent should write a report including a list of options of all strategies developed in task 5 which appear to be practical, important and implementable. This list should be divided by areas of need and should include as full a description as possible of pros and cons of each option, foreseable implementation issues and list of the necessary agencies or individuals to involve in the strategy. The options should be mailed to CRG members in advance of the meeting to encourage full thought and review of the options. At the CRG meeting, options should be discussed one at a time, focussing on the following questions:

- Does this seem possible to do?
- What might be the problems in implementing?
- Will this adequately address the issue?
- Is this important to do?
- Who would need to be involved?

After each option has been fully discussed and modified as necessary attention should be focussed on the choice of a few of the options. The time necessary for consensus decision-making is worthwhile in this situation.

Resistance to change is likely to occur within organizations. Habit, tradition and fear for one's role in a new system are powerful deterrents to cooperation. If the change agent anticipates them, they can be dealt with on an individual basis. If the change agent ignores them, the resistance can gather momentum and severely compromise the goals of the project. Therefore, when planning implementation of a strategy, the change agent must be as realistic as possible about what can be controled, possible influences and what is beyond current agency capability or capacity. The CRG will be vital in pinpointing these areas.

The change agent should introduce the strategy as simply as possible, stressing the benefits to both agencies, to both agencies' clients and to the overall PSN. Try to avoid premature discussions of organizational implications, budgets, authority or other issues that involve "turf". The involvement of CRG members will help.

If the initial discussions are successful, there should be basic agreement as to the value of proceeding further. Then comes the development of specific, mutually agreeable , realistic results for the project. In determining what is realistic both programs should review all original expectations for the project and modify them as necessary to be satisfactory to each organization. It is essential that there is a frank exchange of views about potential constraints and obstacles from the point of view of each agency.

Once there is agreement on the results that both parties expect and the issues each thinks will arise as those results are pursued, it is sometimes necessary to design the operating details of the project and to record them in a written agreement. Developing the project plan is critical in one very special way--it is the initial test as to whether or not both programs can work together toward a common purpose. The change agent should be available as a facilitator, but the key officials of the agencies involved should agree among themselves on whether written agreements are necessary and on specific actions/decisions that must take place prior to the signing of an agreement, specific individuals or other agencies that will need to be involved, and on schedule for completing the agreement.

In some cases, the final decision to pursue a strategy will need to involve meetings of key agency personnel as well as the CRG. These meetings should take place after the CRG decision meeting to provide important feedback to the CRG regarding the receptivity of the agencies and possible modifications in the strategy design. It is possible that strategies will need to be modified or discarded by the change agent and the CRG at this point.

Once the CRG and key agencies have received the possible implementation strategies, it is the change agent's responsibility to incorporate the feedback into strategy designs and select those strategies which are appropriate and feasible.

Task 7: Implement Strategies

The implementation of strategies will involve close coordination and communication between the change agent and the agency personnel involved in the strategy. The change agent has the initial responsibility for explaining and orienting the agency personnel to the overall goal and objectives of the PSN Optimizing Project, and to an explanation of why and how this specific strategy was designed and chosen. Often this is best done with the involvement of a member or few members of the CRG as well. The first step after basic orientation is to elicit agreement from the agency and key personnel. The benefits to all involved must be clearly perceived as well as the specific expectations of each staff and agency involved.

If these groups have been included in the planning of implementation strategies and if their feedback has been incorporated into the final selection of strategies, it is hoped that all barriers to implementation (i.e. turf disputes, personality issues, or budget and staff constraints) will have surfaced and have been dealt with. It is hoped too that the benefits of strategies will have been perceived by key agency decision-makers prior to implementation.

In some strategies, only one agency may be involved and implementation issues will only be concerned with establishing direction and communication between the change agent and that agency. In strategies that involve the coordination of more than one agency, however, many issues that arise will have to do with focussing and clarifying relationships and roles between agencies.

The change agent should be available throughout the implementation process to aide in the identification and analysis of obstacles, and to facilitate continued communication and working relations between agencies. Regular formal and informal "check-ins" with staff of the agencies are helpful in this regard.

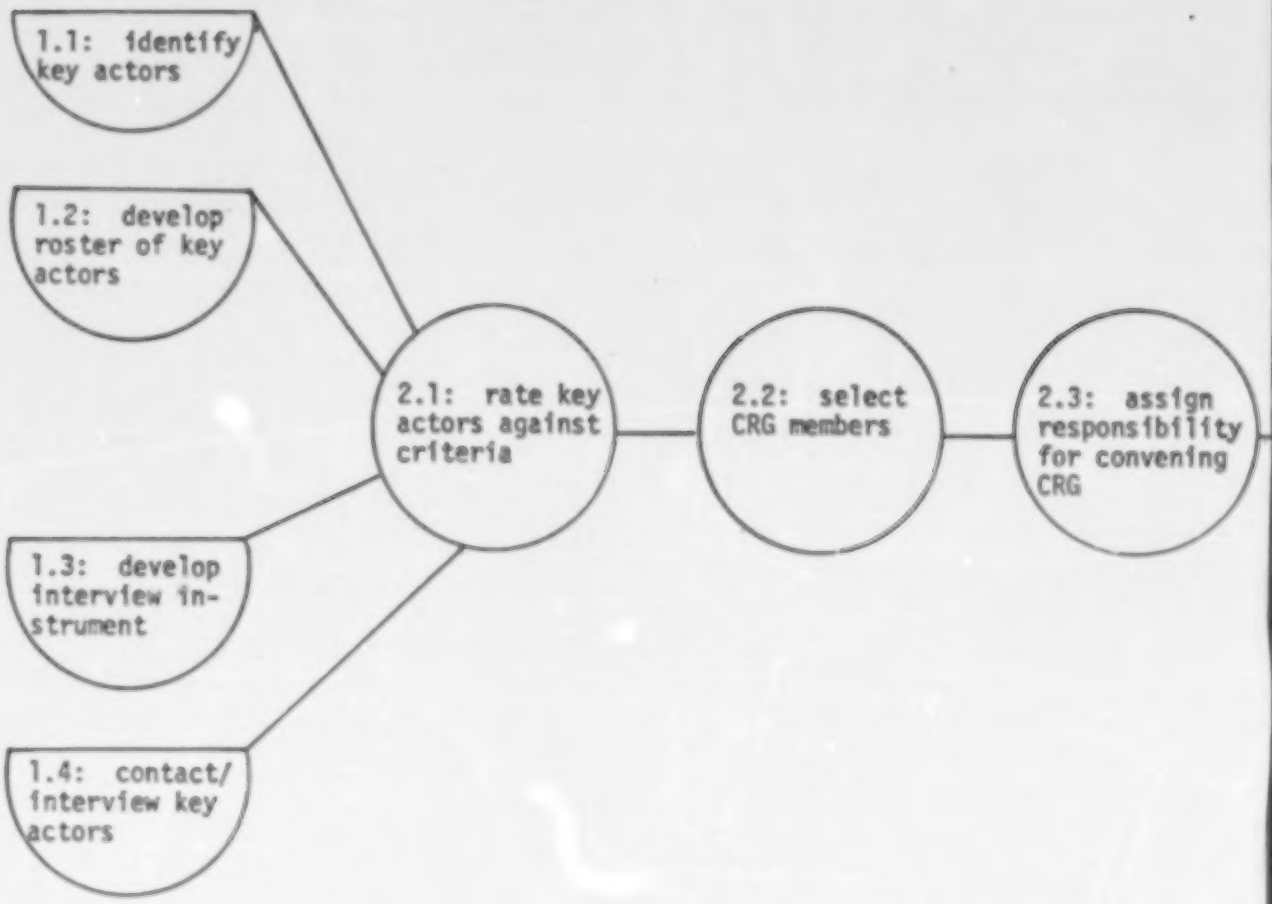
It may be necessary to revise the strategies as unforseen problems arise, and the change agent should be constantly monitoring the implementation process as well as maintaining receptivity to all those involved in the process. When problems arise, members of the CRG may be used as advisors, consultants or mediators if the change agent feels it necessary.

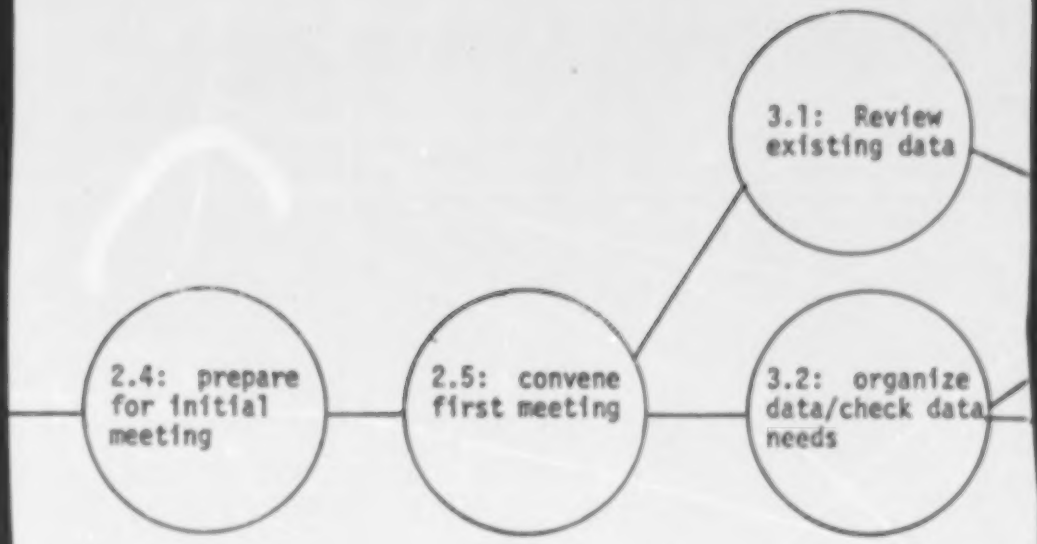
In some cases, the change agent may be filling the role of "PSN staff," with responsibility for carrying out the work of implementing a strategy. It then becomes necessary to closely involve relevant agencies in the county in the review of work done. For example, in Santa Clara County the URSA Project Staff took on responsibility for the development of a resource directory for use by the facilitators in the county. Although URSA did the actual work, to assure use of the directory both the CRG and facilitating agency staff were actively involved in reviewing the format and the contents of the directory.

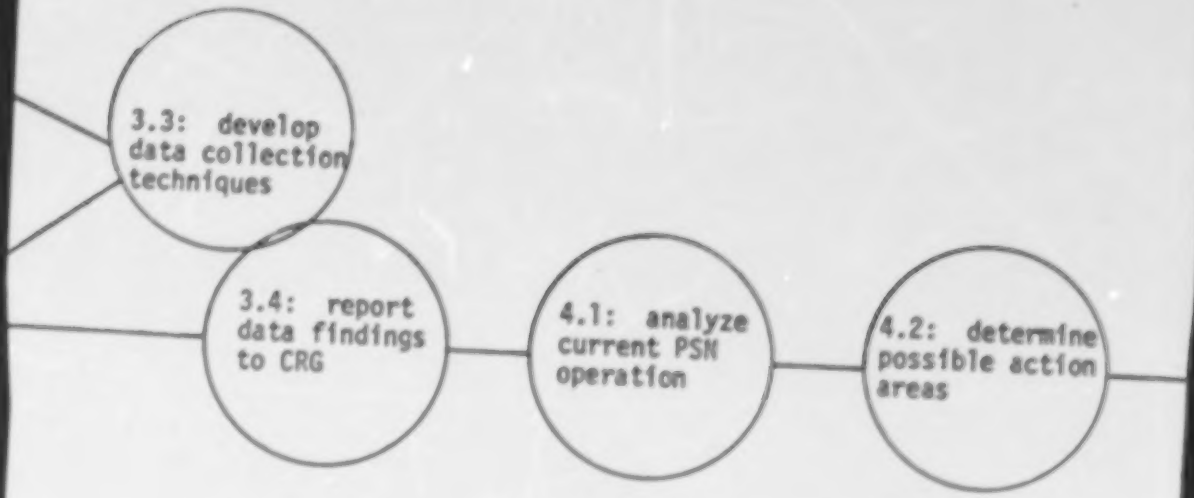
Task 8: Evaluate Strategies

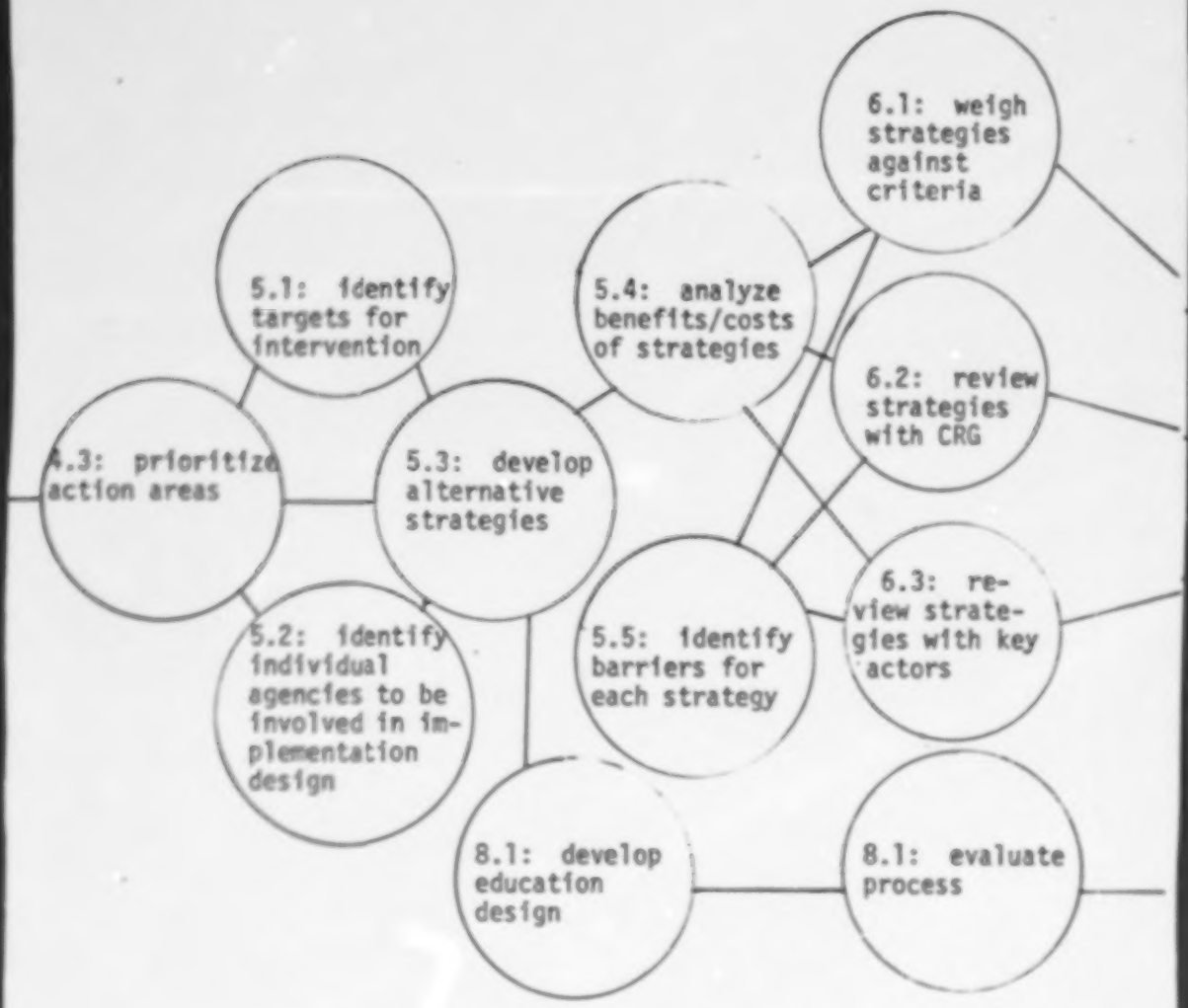
The overall goal of the combined strategies is to optimize the functioning of the PSN. Each strategy needs to be evaluated, therefore, in terms of the degree to which it contributed to the increased efficiency of the particular PSN function it was designed to address. There are three important evaluation areas: 1)the process of designing, selecting and implementing the strategy; 2)the impact of the strategy on the PSN; and 3)the concept of the strategy. That is, what was actually planned and done, what effect(s) did it have, did it achieve what we wanted it to achieve. It is important that evaluation be conducted throughout the implementation of a strategy to provide the feedback to the change agent and the involved staff and agencies that is necessary to modify and correct problems in the strategy. These evaluations may be conducted by the change agent, staff of the involved agencies, the CRG or an outside party. Important sources of evaluation data may include: target populations, staff involved in emplementing a strategy, the change agent, the CRG, or other agencies involved in the overall PSN. Common evluation collection tools include interviews, questionnaires, surveys, monitoring format

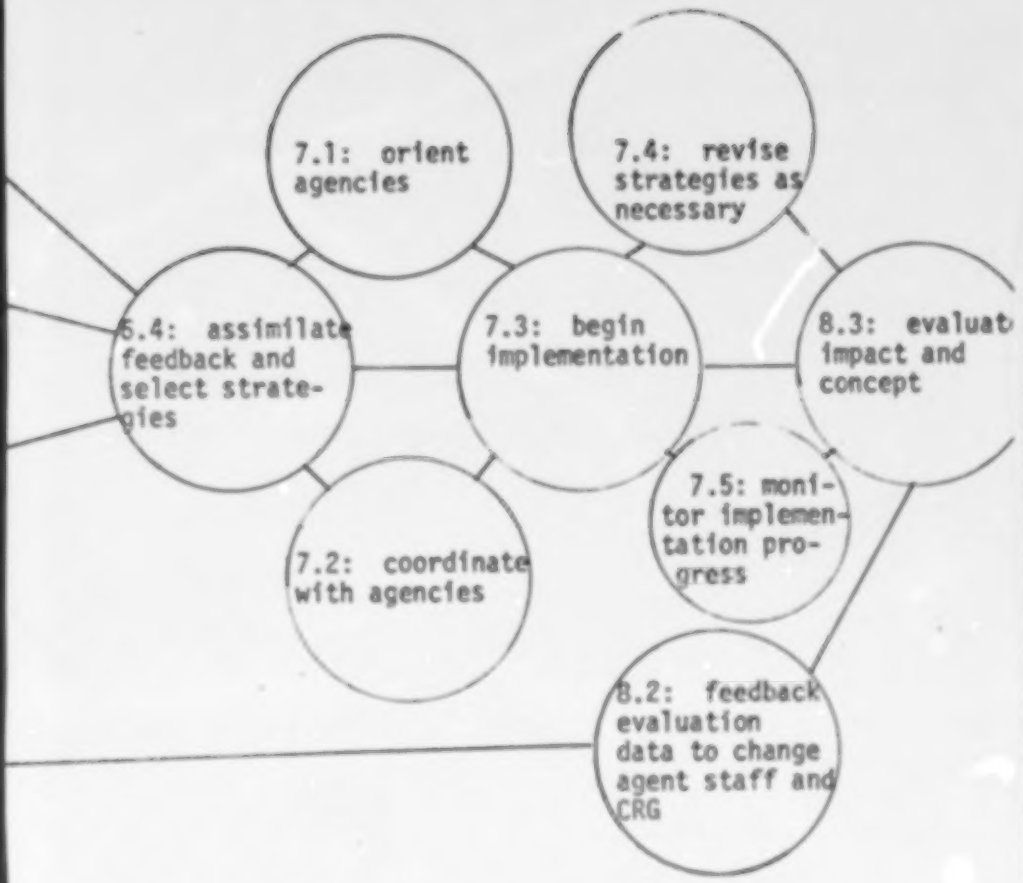
TASK CHART FOR OPTIMIZING PSN


1.1: identify key actors
1.2: develop roster of key actors
1.3: develop interview instrument
1.4: contact/ interview key actors
2.1: rate key actors against criteria
2.2: select CRG members
2.3: assign responsibility for convening CRG


3.1: Review existing data
2.4: prepare for initial meeting
2.5: convene first meeting
3.2: organize data/check data needs


3.3: develop data collection techniques
3.4: report data findings to CRG
4.1: analyze current PSN operation
4.2: determine possible action areas


6.1: weigh strategies against criteria
5.1: identify targets for intervention
5.4: analyze benefits/costs of strategies
6.2: review strategies with CRG
4.3: prioritize action areas
5.3: develop alternative strategies
6.3: review strategies with key actors
5.2: identify individual agencies to be involved in implementation design
5.5: identify barriers for each strategy
8.1: develop education design
8.1: evaluate process


7.1: orient agencies
7.4: revise strategies as necessary
6.4: assimilate feedback and select strategies
7.3: begin implementation
8.3: evaluat impact and concept
7.5: monitor implementation progress
7.2: coordinate with agencies
8.2: feedback evaluation data to change agent staff and CRG

8.4: feedback evaluation data to change agent staff and CRG
Continuous process Tasks 4.1 through 8.2

and statistical reviews. The specific evaluation design will depend on the direction and decision needs of the implementation strategy. Assistance in the development of an evaluation design is often available in local community colleges or universities which may have faculty members who are skilled in designing and conducting evaluations or local or regional private consulting firms.

As shown in the tasks outlined above, optimizing a PSW is a continuing process. In order to maintain that process, it is now necessary to return to Task 4, to re-analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the PSW, to determine new priority action areas, and to continue working through the process of implementation, evaluation, and re-assessment.

4. APPENDIX

The following documents appear in this appendix:

a) Sample "Key Actor Interview Guidelines"

b) Sample "Resource Agent Survey," in three parts

c) Sample data collection plan submitted to the County Review Group for review

d) Sample draft telephone survey format

e) Sample description of data collection efforts

f) Sample report of data collection findings submitted to County Review Group

All of these documents were used in Santa Clara County and are presented only as samples of types of documents which a change agent may wish to utilize in the optimization process.

SAMPLE KEY ACTOR INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Name:

Agency:

Title:

1. How do you fit into the Santa Clara childcare system?

2. What is your agency's role?

3. In your opinion, what are the chief problems and barriers to providing quality childcare in the county?

⟹ Explain our definition of resources.

4. What outside resources do you feel are most needed by childcare providers?

5. In your estimation, are these adequately available? If not, why not?

⟹ Explain our model of a provider services network.

6. What agencies or organizations do you think are key to developing and implementing a provider services network in the county?

7. What individuals do you think are key to developing and implementing a provider services network in the county?

8. What do you think are the best strategies and mechanisms for building linkages between providers and provider resources?

SAMPLE RESOURCE AGENT SURVEY, (IN THREE PARTS)

PART I Information

Name of Agency:

Contact person:

Address:

Phone:

Description of Services offered:

Hours available:

Eligibility:

Area served:

Cost to client:

How do most of your clients find out about your service?

Do you have the capability for handling more clients than you now serve?

Do you have copies of informational brochures that we could have?

Do you desire to or have to restrict the number of clients who uses your resources?

PART II--RESOURCE SURVEY CHECKLIST

Potential Functions	Do you have money resources for this?	Do you have information available about this?	Do you have people available for training assistance or direct provision?	Do you do advocac
I. ADMINISTRATION				
Getting insurance				
Billing/collecting fees				
Keeping up with regulations				
Bookkeeping/accounting				
Relating to clients				
Maintaining enrollment				
Keeping records				
Maintaining facilities				
Completing client applications				
Participating in advocacy activities				
Relating to the public				
Maintaining and developing personnel procedures				
Fund raising				
Proposal writing				
Completing funding/ service applications				
II. PROGRAM				
A. Curriculum				
Teaching/developing children's skills in:				
motor coordination				

Potential Functions	Do you have money resources for this?	Do you have information available about this?	Do you have people available for training assistance or direct provision?	Do you do advoc
problem-solving				
socialization				
communication				
reading/academic subjects				
survival				
creative expression				
Providing information about:				
sex				
health				
nutrition				
social living				
sc'ence/nature				
B. Health				
Identifying health problems:				
caring for sick children				
first aid				
dispensing drugs				
finding emergency care				

Potential Functions	Do you have money resources for this?	Do you have information available about this?	Do you have people available for training assistance or direct provision?	Do you do advoca
Well child care: screening/immunizing				
Maintaining records				
C. Nutrition Planning meals/menus/ snacks				
Purchasing food				
Preparing food				
Serving food				
Storing food				
D. Social Services Informing and referring clients to other services				
Following up referrals				
Parent/child counseling				
Providing and arranging transportation				
Providing/arranging bi-lingual services				
Providing/arranging developmental screening				
E. Parent Involvement Informing parents of program goals/objectives				

Potential Functions	Do you have money resources for this?	Do you have information available about this?	Do you have people available for training assistance or direct provision?	Do you do advoca
Providing/arranging parent conferences				
Providing training/ information to parents				
Involving parents in program activities				
Involving parents in policy making				
Involving parents in program support activities				
III. STAFF Providing/getting information on: child development				
staff relationships				
problem solving				
educational philosophy				
behavior/socialization				
educational goals				
bi-lingual education				
special curriculum-methods				
curriculum content areas				

Potential Functions	Do you have money resources for this?	Do you have information available about this?	Do you have people available for training assistance or direct provision?	Do you do advoca
health problems				
nutrition				
regulations and compliance				
curriculum planning and schedules				
Providing/arranging training in: child development				
staff relationships				
problem solving				
educational philosophy				
behavior/socialization				
educational goals				
bi-linqual education				
special curriculum methods				
curriculum content areas				
health problems				
nutrition				
regulations and compliance				
curriculum planning and schedules				

PART III--EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS, RESOURCE AGENCIES

Do you feel there are gaps in resources available to day care providers county-wide?

What problems do you see in delivering services?

How do you determine the needs of the providers you serve?

Do you feel there are unnecessary duplications in resource services for day care providers?

What publications do you distribute? To whom?

SAMPLE DATA COLLECTION PLAN

(Submitted to the County Review Group for review)

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: COUNTY REVIEW GROUP MEMBERS

FROM: Laurie Olsen, URSA

DATE: January 25, 1977

As a result of the discussion at our meeting last week, we have developed two data collection efforts that address the concerns you expressed for information on the relationships among facilitating agencies and relationships between facilitating agencies and resource agents. We'd like to have your comments by the middle of the first week in February so we can get started on the work. Call or write either Ric or myself.

Thanks,

Laurie.

LO/zn

ADDENDA TO WORK PLAN

At the January 19 meeting of the County Review Group, the need for additional research was articulated to determine the current relationships between facilitating agencies, and to map out linkages between facilitators and resource agents. Both of these are essential to future coordination planning and to the description of the Santa Clara PSN. The research will be conducted in two stages; interviews with facilitators, and interviews with key actors in facilitating agencies. These serve as tools for decision making on the Network Management and Facilitation Centralization projects.

A. Interviews with Facilitators

In order to better understand the relationship between facilitators and resource agents, and to define more clearly the activities that are now engaged in facilitators, we will interview facilitators about which resource agents they know of and refer to. The basis of this interview will be the "laundry list" of resource agents in Santa Clara County currently being developed in the resource directory project. This list will be utilized in an interview format similar to that used in our Pre and Post Provider Survey. The project will consist of four subtasks:

1. design of interview format (last week of February)
2. identification of interviewees (last week of February)
3. data collection (March)
4. data analysis (last week in March)

1. Design of Interview Format

Design of the interview format will take place in late February as the resource directory project nears completion. The basic format will be a checklist with space for comment regarding knowledge of a resource agent, and extent and type of use of a resource agent. Ric Mayer and Laurie Olsen will be responsible for developing the instrument. The County Review Group will review the format, a field-test run, and revisions made as necessary.

2. Identification of Interviewees

As the intent of this survey is to establish patterns of referrals and linkages, the individuals to be interviewed will be those with specific facilitating responsibilities in each of the major facilitating agencies. These will include: DSS social workers assigned to family day care home providers, staff of 4Cs, PACCC, Mountain View Cluster Group, PNSA, FDCHA, and I & R Services of Santa Clara County. To be sure of a representative sample, we will interview 20% of the staff in each agency.

3. Data Collection

Initial contact with each interviewee will be established by telephone. This contact will include introduction of the project, explanation of the survey and a request for cooperation. The survey will then be mailed out to those who agree to participate. This is necessary because the list of resource agents will be too long and unwieldy for a telephone survey. Respondents will be provided with stamped return envelopes.

4. Data Analysis

Initial analysis of the data will involve computing and comparing facilitators' responses within an agency to ascertain whether generalizations can be made on an agency level regarding which resource agents are known and referred to. Then comparisons will be made between agencies. Finally, analysis will be done of which agents are most and least used. This analysis will be conducted by Laurie Olsen and Ric Mayer, with discussion by the County Review Group.

B. Data Collection Regarding Relationships Between Facilitating Agencies

As a basis of coordinative planning, this data collection effort will focus on the relationships between facilitating agencies. We will look at structural features of these relationships as well as attitudes and perceptions. Structural features to be looked at include:

- joint interagency council memberships
- degree of general exchange of information
- amount of informal communication
- knowledge of other agency programs

- acquaintance of personnel interagency
- frequency of interactions
- client referrals
- training interactions
- joint projects
- exchange of resources
- formal exchanges of information
- joint budgetary considerations
- formal overlapping boards
- written agreements
- joint ownership of facilitaties

Attitudinal and perception features include:

- willingness to work with other organizations
- the legitimacy and credibility of organizations to each other
- perceived areas of organizational interdependence (what costs and benefits do each see)

The tasks in this project include: design of file search and interview format, (first week in February), identification of interviewees, (first week in February), data collection (February) and data analysis, (second week in March).

1. Design of Interview Format

   Design of the interview instrument will take place the first week in February by URSA staff Ric Mayer and Laurie Olsen. The format will be in-person open-ended questions, focussing on the facilitating agencies listed on our Pre and Post Survey Form. A field test and review by the County Review Group will be done and revisions made as necessary.

2. Identification of Interviewees

   In each of the eight agencies we have identified as facilitating agencies, key actors will be chosen on the basis of power in coordinative decision making, and involvement with the PSN in Santa Clara. Our sample will consist of all the key actors in these roles.

3. Data Collection

Key actors will be contacted by telephone to ascertain their cooperation to explain what is involved in the proposed interview, and to get up an appointment for an in-person interview. All interviews will be conducted by URSA project staff. A file search will be conducted as necessary to supplement this information.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis will consist of mapping out current relationships between facilitating agencies in the county, and determining the implications of current linkages and attitudes for future coordination plans between those agencies. This will be conducted in mid-March by members of the URSA Project Staff, and with discussions by the County Review Group.

SAMPLE DRAFT TELEPHONE SURVEY FORMAT

Interviewer _____ Date _____

1. Type of Provider

   Family Day Care Home Public Center Private nonprofit

   Private Proprietary

2. Location _____

   Geocode 1 Geocode 2 Geocode 3 Geocode 4

3. Have you ever heard of: ? Have you ever used: ?

	yes	*no*	*yes*	*no*	*(comments)*
Childcare Pilot Study	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Childcare Coordinating Council (4C)	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Dept. of Social Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Family Daycare Assoc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Calif. Assoc. for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC)	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Information and Referral Services of Santa Clara County, Inc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Sunnyvale TOTS (Geocode 1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
PACCC (Geocode 1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____

4. Are there other agencies or people you go to for outside help, information or resources?

   ___ *no*

   ___ *yes* _____

   _____

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION OF DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS

DATA COLLECTION TOOL: PRE-POST SURVEY

Pre-Post Survey Description and Implementation

The pre and post survey is a tool of data collection that will provide the basis for decision making in several projects. This survey is conducted to a representative sample of childcare providers. The conduct of the pre and post surveys involves several tasks:

- sample selection
- interview design
- conduct of interviews
- analysis

Task 1: Sample Selection

The sample selection of childcare providers for our phone survey on provider-resource linkages, was chosen by a stratified random sample method. To obtain a meaningful data base, we needed responses from 7% of the childcare providers in Santa Clara County. Using the childcare pilot study computer print-out list of active childcare providers, a sample was randomly chosen. As they were selected, they were placed in the appropriate cells of our stratified categories. The cell classifications were based on the two variables we had found to be of major significance in determining a childcare providers knowledge of resources and resource availability, accessibility and utilization. These factors are location and type of childcare provision.

- Location as a Factor

  To be sure our sample represented the entire county, we used a random selection proportionate to the total number of childcare providers in each geocode area defined by the Childcare Pilot Study. The county is divided into four geocodes. Thus, geocode 1 which has 441 childcare providers, or 20% of the total childcare providers in the county constitutes 20% of our random sample (or 23 Family Day Care Homes and 6 centers). Similarly, 28% of the sample is taken from geocode 2, 38% from geocode 3, and 14% from geocode 4.

- Type of Childcare Provider as a Factor

Our second basis for stratification is the type of childcare provider. The findings of our initial data collection and agreement of the childcare world shows that family day care homes and public and private centers all face different problems and issues in resource utilization. A family day care home, for example, faces different problems than a large public center: it is more often isolated, it requires different staff training, it serves fewer children and it often sees its tasks as quite different. As a result family day care homes express different resource needs and have less access to resources in general. The distinction between public centers, private nonprofit and private proprietary centers is important becuase of the different problems they face in obtaining resources due to sponsorship and organizational structure.

There are far fewer childcare centers in Santa Clara County than family day care homes. Therefore, family day care homes constitute the largest part of our sample. The sample is comprised as follows:

	FDCH	Public Ctr.	Priv. Ctr. N-P	Private Prop.
Geocode 1 (20% of total)	24			5
Geocode 2 (28% of total)	32			7
Geocode 3 (38% of total)	42	2	5	9
Geocode 4 (14% of total)	16			3
TOTAL	112	2	5	24

Task 2: Interview Design

The survey was designed to be a quickly and easily administered phone interview that could elicit primarily yes and no responses, with probing as necessary only in those cases where appropriate. The URSA Project Staff drafted an initial interview format for review by the County Review Group and for a field test of ten phone interviews. The review focussed on several issues:

- clarity of approach and language;
- comprehensiveness and appropriateness of list of agencies; and
- efficiency of format in collecting data needed

The field test and CRG review resulted in several changes in format including the addition of several agencies to the list, the inclusion of "how" questions to follow a "yes" response to the use of agencies.

Task 3: Conduct of Interviews

Interviews were conducted by two URSA Project Staff over a period of two weeks. Responses were recorded individually on interview forms coded by type of provider and geocode area. In cases where a listed provider no longer cared for children, another provider was randomly selected from the appropriate cell. Calls were made in the morning and mid-afternoon to avoid meal times and nap times and thereby avoid inconveniencing the child care provider respondents. Interviews were conducted between December 15 and January 5 by URSA Staff.

Task 4: Analysis

Basic analysis of the data is scheduled for the first two weeks in January, with the focus on answering questions for the Facilitation Project and the Resource Directory Project. The two URSA staff members who conducted the interviews will be chiefly responsible for data analysis.

SAMPLE REPORT OF DATA COLLECTION FINDINGS

(Submitted to County Review Group)

Presentation of Data: The Pre and Post Telephone Survey

The pre and post telephone survey was designed and conducted to aid in decision making on several of our projects, as well as to contribute to the overall model of a PSN in Santa Clara County. Basically, the survey aimed to give us information about which agencies are best known and most used by childcare providers in Santa Clara and to help us define the critical links between providers and resource agencies in the area. Our random sample of respondents reflected approximately 7% of all childcare providers in the county. Our cell classifications were based on two variables we had found in our first analysis of the county to be of major significance in determining a childcare providers knowledge of resources and resource availability, accessibility and utilization. These factors are location and type of childcare provision. Our final sample was as follows:

	FDCH	Public Ctr.	Priv. Ctr. N-P	Private Prop.
Geocode 1 (20% of total)	24			4
Geocode 2 (28% of total)	32			5
Geocode 3 (38% of total)	50	2	9	8
Geocode 4 (14% of total)	17			3
TOTAL	123	2	9	20

The following presentation of data is divided into sections representing each of the facilitating agencies mentioned by childcare providers and includes data breakdowns by type of provider. An initial impressions section follows the presentation of data.

Child Care Pilot Study

Knowledge: 90% of all childcare providers we polled had heard of the Child Care Pilot Study (CCPS) and identified it in terms of subsidies for individual children. This 90% is made up of:

95% of all private proprietary centers
89% of all family day care homes
88% of all private nonprofit centers
100% of the public centers

Usage: 46% of our sample of childcare providers said they "used" the services of the CCPS although for all but 1% of the sample they meant that children in their care were subsidized by CCPS funds. The 1% who used the CCPS for provider needs said they sometimes called to get information on other childcare issues. The 46% who responded that they "used" the CCPS included:

72% of all private proprietary centers
40% of family day care homes
78% of private nonprofit centers
none of the public centers

Comments: The fact that the CCPS provides financial support for childcare in the county is the aspect of the project that is known. Almost everyone in our sample knew about it, even though half of those did not use it. Whereas the percentages of each of the types of childcare providers with knowledge of CCPS is roughly the same, the numbers of family day care homes who actually have "used" the CCPS is significantly less than in other categories.

Community Coordinated Child Development Council (4C) of Santa Clara

Knowledge: 28% of the total childcare providers we surveyed had heard of the 4Cs. This includes: 72% of private proprietary centers
16% of family day care homes
89% of private nonprofit centers
100% of public centers

Usages: 27% of the providers had used the 4Cs including:
72% of private proprietary centers
4% of family day care homes
78% of private non profit centers
100% of public centers

Those who use the services of 4Cs use it extensively and reported multiple services they had received as well as indicating that they go back for more. They mentioned workshops, referrals, information, training and materials.

Comments: The low total percentages of childcare providers is due to inclusion of family day care homes in the total. If one just looks at centers, which is where 4Cs seems to concentrate, the percentage of providers who know of the 4Cs becomes 79% and the percentage who use it becomes 76%. It is also noteworthy that almost all of the providers who reported having heard of 4Cs also use its services.

Department of Social Services

Knowledge: 90% of all the providers we surveyed had heard of the DSS, including

100% of family day care homes
72% of private proprietary
56% of private nonprofits
50% of public centers

Usage: All of the family day care homes we surveyed were licensed by DSS, and therefore were eligible for specific services that other child care providers were not. Of the family day care homes providers,

91% were aware of the I & R service, and 79% used it
95% were receiving the Clipboard, and 91% said they read it

In addition, 39% volunteered that they call their social workers for information and help whenever they need it.

Only 21% of the non-family day care home providers said they used DSS services, and these were primarily information requests to the Welfare Department. 60% of those family day care home providers we surveyed only used DSS services, that is, they do not go to any other agencies, groups or individuals in the county for resources.

Comments: The fact that family day care homes are licensed by DSS seems to be the major linkage between providers and the agency. As a result of this licensure, family day care home providers become tied into a network which includes the Clipboard and an assigned social worker. Thus, a high percentage of day care home providers use the services of DSS.

Family Day Care Home Association

Knowledge: 47% of the family day care homes we surveyed had heard of the Family Day Care Home Association (FDCHA), either through mention in the Clipboard or from friends. None of the non-family day care home providers had heard of the FDCHA.

Usage: 15% of the family day care home providers said they used the services of FDCHA. 7% of these are members, the others had gone to a meeting or two or were about to join for insurance reasons.

Comments: FDCHA has a specified focus, and providers seem to go to it for specific needs rather than general facilitation. Those who had heard of the FDCHA but did not use the services said they didn't either because "I don't need it", because it costs money, or because it would require going to meetings.

Private Nursery School Association

Knowledge: 14% of childcare providers polled had heard of the Private Nursery School Association (PNSA). This includes:
- 61% of private proprietary centers
- 3% of family day care homes
- 56% of private nonprofits
- 50% of public centers.

Usage: 5% of childcare providers we surveyed have used PNSA and this includes:
- 33% of private proprietary centers
- 22% of private non profit centers
- no family day care homes
- no public centers

Comments: PNSA is a specific focus organization that does not really offer anything to providers other than private nursery schools. Half of those in the target group who knew of PNSA used it, and used it primarily as a professional organization that tied them to other private providers.

California Association for the Education of Young Children

Knowledge: 15% of all childcare providers we surveyed had heard of the CAEYC. This includes:
- 56% of the private proprietary centers
- 5% of family day care homes
- 44% of private nonprofit centers
- 100% of public centers

The 5% of family day care home providers who had heard of CAEYC said they had heard of it when they were working in nursery schools or day care centers.

Usage: 6% of all childcare providers reported using the services of CAEYC, including:

22% of private proprietary centers
33% of private non profit centers
100% of public centers
no family day care homes

These reports included receiving newsletters, going to workshops, attending conferences, using materials.

Information and Referral Services of Santa Clara County

Knowledge: 24% of those we polled said they had heard of the I & R, but after probing a little, it became clear that only 4% actually meant the county I & R. Perhaps because of the context of a survey on childcare provider resources, most of the respondents thought we meant the DSS childcare referral I & R.

Usage: 3% of the providers we polled said they had used the I & R and those uses ranged from finding adult education courses to tracking down health information.

California State Department of Health

Knowledge: 90% of all providers said they had heard of the State Department of Health, although responses to questions about how the services are used indicated that there was confusion between the Santa Clara County Health Department and the State Department of Health. This confusion makes our results somewhat invalid. The 90% who reported knowing about the State Dept. of Health includes:

94% of private proprietary centers
100% of private nonprofit centers
89% of family day care homes
100% of public centers

Usage: The State Department of Health is responsible for licensing those centers that need to be licensed (i.e. private centers), so all of the private centers had at least initial linkages to the agency. The County Health Department provides health services that are required for licensure by childcare providers, so other providers are linked to that agency by virtue of licensing requirements. The range of responses to how the agency is used included health information, public health nurses, health screening, TB tests and chest x-rays for licensure, licensing itself. These indicate confusion between the different agencies and make it difficult to separate out which agencies have links with which providers. However, between them,

the two agencies (State and County) serve the facilitation and direct services role to 28% of all the providers we surveyed, including:

56% of private proprietary
100% of private non-profit
100% of public centers
17% of family day care homes

Other Agencies----------

23% of the childcare providers we surveyed went to facilitators other than those we listed above. These responses were solicited, but specific agencies were not mentioned in the question. The following were identified:

Facilitators:

the newspaper
local churches
local schools
other childcare providers (friends, neighbors, groups)

Direct resources:

Children's Health Council
Voluntary Action Bureau
De Anza College
Mental Health Agencies
Expanded Nutritional Education Program
private M.D.s
Valley Medical Center
United Jewish Community Centers
local libraries
Foster Grandparents

Initial Impressions

This section presents some of our overall impressions of the interviewer and URSA staff.

- It is significant that with the exception of licensure, 33% of the family day care homes, and 10% of the private proprietary centers do not go to any outside agencies or resources because "we don't need them". For the remaining 67% there was a basic pattern that most childcare providers had one facilitator they would go to for most things and that facilitator would be used to track down other resources. So, for example, a family day care home provider might go to their social workers for help and wouldn't go to other agencies even if they knew about them.

- Generally, people learned about resources in three ways: from other providers, family day care homes learned them through the Clipboard or their DSS social worker and centers learned of them through 4C.

- Those agencies which are best known and most used by childcare providers in Santa Clara County include the Child Care Pilot Study, 4Cs, the Department of Social Services, and the two Health Departments. A closer look at the elements of these agencies and the type of usage and knowledge reported gives important insights into how the PSN now operates in the county, and into what creates a strong linkage between a childcare provider and a facilitating or direct service agency. Generally, we can say that the provision of placement services and the responsibility for licensing are the two strongest links between a provider and an agency. In those cases where these services are attended by other services such as DSS which sends a newsletter and assigns a social worker to each licensed family day care home provider, the initial linkage is strengthened. Similarly, the Child Care Pilot Study is known throughout the county because it provides placement services to the provider as well as to the client. But because no other services are offered, the linkage is not optimally used.

- In contrast to the other agencies, almost all of those providers who know of the services of 4C, also use it. Thus it must be assumed that the 4Cs offers what those providers they view as their constituency (centers) most want.